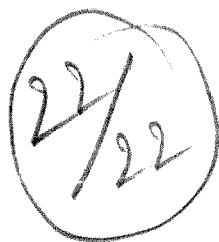


Journal of Ancient Indian History

Volume XXVI — 2009-10

Edited by Suchandra Ghosh



DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE
UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

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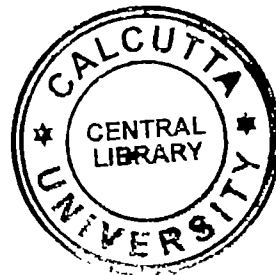
CUK-H00439-22-6165869

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UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA
1, Reformatory Street
Alipur, Kolkata 700 027
2010

JOURNAL OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

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Published in India by the Registrar, University of Calcutta
87/1 College Street, Senate House, Kolkata 700 073
and Printed by Pradip Kumar Ghosh, Superintendent,
C.U. Press, 48, Hazra Road, Kolkata 700 019.

Price : Rs. 100/-

G165869

Reg. No. 2663B

ISSN No. 0075-4110

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Inner and Outer World: A Historian's Look at the *Bhakti* Tradition*

GANAPATHY SUBBIAH

Finally, perspective and illumination on the relation of Islam to history may be won by sketching a comparison with the positions of three other major *Weltanschauungerr* : the Hindu, Christian and Marxist.By ignoring complexities, one might arrange representatives of these faiths in a graded series as follows: the Hindu, for whom ultimately history is not significant; the Christian, for whom it is significant but not decisive; the Muslim, for whom it is decisive but not final; the Marxist for whom it is all in all.

—Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton, 1957, p. 21

At the outset, an explanation as to why I have chosen to begin my lecture with the above quote is perhaps in order. Not only in this quote but also in what I shall attempt to share with you further in this lecture, you will find that, in the formulation of my ideas as well as in my presentation, I have heavily drawn upon the writings of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, an authority on Islam and the author of many important works on Comparative Religion including *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1962, 1978, henceforth *TMAEOR*) that has been widely acclaimed as “a modern classic of religious studies”¹. The subcontinent of India has been hailed as ‘the world’s oldest and most interesting “living laboratory” of religious pluralism’² on account of the fact that it has not only been the birthplace of four major religions of the world but also the land where adherents of nearly all major religions of the world have been coexisting for centuries now. Can we then surmise that the people of the subcontinent were, and still are prone to be more religious minded than others? It is, indeed, a difficult and even a tricky question to answer. For, there is no term in any of the Indian languages that conceptualizes, to quote Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “institutional religion either singular or plural. Nor was there any term enabling an Indian to discriminate conceptually the religious and other aspects of his society’s life.”³ This means that one can well come out with a diametrically opposite answer to the question posed above. In fact this is precisely what Louis Renou says in a succinct manner in the following quote:

It has been constantly asserted that India is obsessed with religion. It might be equally well maintained that India takes no cognizance of religion as an independent phenomenon.⁴

All this, in my view, means that if and when one tries to bring in what is called ‘religion’ in general or a particular religious tradition in the subcontinent, for academic discussion, the exercise does call for on our part, awareness of certain serious and basic issues involved before we proceed. It is in this context, I see the relevance of the quote

*Swami Nirlepananda Endowment Lecture, 2010, University of Calcutta

from Smith with which I began. The quote, in my view, accurately reflects the existential dilemma that stares at anyone who intends to take a peep into the realm of what is called 'Hindu religion' from a historical perspective. (Note: The term 'religion' is not used in the quote and we shall see below how Smith defines the other term 'Hindu') If history is insignificant to the 'Hindu'—never mind for the moment whom does the term exactly refer to—and, conceptually the term 'religion' is unknown to the 'Hindu', how does then one approach the 'Hindu religion' from a historical perspective? Would it not be however sincerely one tries to approach it, an endeavour that is doomed to fail and, therefore, an exercise in futility? Right at the very start then we are confronted with a problem and the problem is, ironically if I may say, rooted in the very two terms namely 'Hindu' and 'religion'.

Let us take the word, 'religion' first. The term is widely in currency in English language. Yet, scholars have found the task of defining or conceptualizing it a daunting one although they all share the concern and the need to have a broad characterization of the term in the context of cross-cultural understanding and discourse. Smith, in his classic work mentioned above, has drawn attention to some of the vital points on the question. Two of those have a direct bearing on our discussion here. Firstly, Smith has convincingly shown that the term 'religion' as we understand it today is a concept invented and disseminated in the rest of the world since the early nineteenth century by the West, and no classical language or culture in the world has a word for the concept of 'religion' or 'religions' in the sense we use it now. Secondly, and in view of this fact, he strongly recommends that we better not retain the term 'religion' in cross-cultural and academic discourse because the term not only misleads and confuses us but even distorts our perception. To quote him:

I have become strongly convinced that the vitality of personal faith on the one hand, and, on the other hand (quite separately), progress in understanding—even at the academic level—of the traditions of other people throughout history and throughout the world, are both seriously blocked by our attempt to conceptualize what is involved in each in terms of (a) religion.⁵

Let us now turn to the other term 'Hindu' from which the appellation 'Hinduism' is derived. I shall refrain myself from sketching in detail the etymological antecedents of the term 'Hindu'. These are familiar to students of early Indian history, and, in any case, B. N. Mukherjee has broadly dealt with these issues in his recent monograph on *The Concept of India* (1998). I would however like to restate here a couple of points. Firstly, neither in the indigenous sources nor in any foreign sources do we find a term that denoted the whole or larger part of the subcontinent until about the closing centuries of the first millennium B.C. The earliest occurrence of a single appellation denoting a large part, if not the whole, of the subcontinent—the *Jambudvīpa*—is found in the records of the Maurya king Asoka.

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The term 'Hi(n)du(sh)' found in the inscription of the Persian ruler Darius-I (522-486 B.C.) and term 'Indoi' coined subsequently by the Greeks denoted only the lower region of the river Sindhu. The geographical connotation of the Northwestern border region of the subcontinent was subsequently extended to denote the whole of the subcontinent by the successive waves of immigrants into the subcontinent through the Sindhu region.

These are fairly known facts. But I would however like to draw your attention here to a crucial point. At some point of time, the term 'Hi(n)du' that, originally, both semantically as well as historically, had secular and geographical connotations turned into a religious appellation. While the term 'India' (or 'Indians') which is ultimately derived from 'Sindhu' or 'Indus' has retained only its geographical connotation to this day, the term 'Hindu' which is also derived from the same word, however, turned into a term that denoted a religion. Consequently, it is now perfectly normal to denote the Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and other religious groups in the subcontinent as Indian Buddhists, Indian Muslims Indian Christians and so on; but, it is not so if one uses the term 'Hindu' as adjectival substitute for 'Indian' and say, for instance, 'Hindu Muslims' 'Hindu Christians', and so on.

We cannot definitely say how and when this amazing turn occurred. It is, however, worth noting here that Alberuni (born in 973 A.D.), the towering Islamic intellectual of the Middle Ages, uses the term 'Hindu' in his monumental work *Tafikh al-hind* or *The History of India* in a broad cultural sense to denote various aspects of the culture of the non-Muslim population of the subcontinent.⁶ Perhaps the term started acquiring specific religious connotation after the time of Alberuni mainly because of the impact of his writings on Islamic scholars in the subsequent centuries.

In his General President's address at the 66th Session of the Indian History Congress, D. N Jha has dwelt upon this question at some length and his conclusion is: "The general absence of the words 'Hindu' and 'Hindudharma' in the pre-colonial Sanskrit texts and their limited connotation in the not-too-frequent occurrences in the *bhakti* literature clearly indicate that Indians did not create a Hindu religious identity for themselves. ...The British borrowed the word 'Hindu' from India, gave it a new meaning and significance, reimported it into India as a reified phenomenon called Hinduism, ...Given this background, Hinduism was the creation of the colonial period and cannot lay claim to any great antiquity."⁷ In other words, the use of the term 'Hinduism' as proper name of a religion and the term 'Hindu' as a proper noun denoting an individual religious person or a group is not older than the nineteenth century. This means that the use of these terms in the context of the early Indian history would be a clear case of anachronism. Discerning scholars, including some of those who have worked on early Indian history—are aware of all these, and I can readily think of at least one historian—Professor Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, who, in his book on *The Evolution of Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, "refrained from using the expression on the ground that in no ancient Indian record the word Hindu has even been

used”.⁸ Notwithstanding all these, the terms ‘Hindu’ or ‘Hinduism’ are still very much in currency in serious academic discourses in the context of early Indian history and culture not merely as descriptive terms but as analytical categories as well. There have been some brave attempts by native as well as foreign scholars to define or at least to demarcate the ‘characteristics’ that these two terms are supposed to refer to. But the terms have defied all such attempts and still remain indefinable and unexplainable categories. If one is asked to define or characterize who is a ‘Hindu’ the best that one can say is that a ‘Hindu’ is someone who belongs to a residual category; that means one who is not a Muslim or a Christian or a Parsi or a Jew or a Buddhist or a Jain or member of any other denomination is a ‘Hindu’; or, to put it in a simple and straight forward manner, any person who does not mind being called a ‘Hindu’ is a Hindu. Citing the practical difficulties faced by the census officials of the British government in identifying who belonged to the Hindu community, Smith therefore asserts:

...that the concept of a religious system, whether ideal or sociological, is here alien and invalid. It is a Western (and Muslim) concept, which Westerners (and Muslims) have tried to impose upon their understanding of India: but it does not fit. *There are Hindus, but there is no Hinduism* (*italics added*).

My objection to the term ‘Hinduism’ of course, is not on the grounds that nothing exists. Obviously, a multitude of phenomena is implicated by this term. My point, and I think that this is the first step that one must take towards understanding something of the vision of the Hindus, is that the mass of religious phenomena that we shelter under the umbrella of that term, is not a unity and does not aspire to be. It is not an entity in any theoretical sense, let alone any practical one.⁹

It must be noted that Smith, while arguing against the use of the term ‘Hinduism’ does retain the term ‘Hindu’ and uses it “as a proper (rather than generic) noun connoting, in accordance with its original usage, all indigenous religious traditions of India (I would not care to exclude Jains or Indian Buddhists).”¹⁰

There is yet another important issue that needs to be mentioned here. The term ‘religion’, as a concept, is not merely a modern western invention but it is also increasingly being employed to refer to diverse ideological communities. And, the concept as well as its usage as a nomenclature to refer to a community driven by a particular ideology are dictated by a mode of linear thinking that assigns communities as ‘belonging to this religion’ and ‘not that religion’. There can be, and there are, however other modes of perception in which one need not be identified as belonging to either ‘this’ or ‘that’ and one could well be simultaneously or concurrently belonging to ‘this’ as well as ‘that’. For instance, a Chinese could simultaneously be a Taoist, a Confucian, and a Buddhist. Likewise a so-called ‘Hindu’ could concurrently be an advaitin and an ardent devotee of goddess, as exemplified by the tradition of Sankaracharyas starting with Adi Sankaracharya.

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We may now draw some broad conclusions from what we have discussed so far. Firstly the term 'Hindu', if at all we intend to retain it in the context of any discourse on early Indian religious history, may better be used in its earlier and original geographical connotation, that is to refer to all traditions of the subcontinent. This does not, and should not be taken to, mean that one is suggesting or advocating a unitary or homogenous character of what is called 'Hindu' tradition. On the contrary, our contention is that both the terms, namely 'Hinduism' as well as 'religion' are, as conceptual appellations, more of liabilities than assets and we would be better advised to drop them from serious academic discourse. Secondly, we would be better off if we drop these labels and find other ways of perceiving the religions of the early Indian people that may save us from falling into pitfalls.

If we are to drop the terms 'religion' and 'Hindu' from our discussion, how do we describe the varied strands of faith particularly of the early Indian history. Was there an indigenous way of describing what is now commonly described as 'religion'? There are several terms by which different religious communities were identified by the adherents themselves or by others in early India such as *mata* (doctrine), *mārga*, *vāda* (way or path), *sampradāya* (tradition), *parampara* (lineage) *yāna* (vehicle), *samayam*, and so on. None of them is, however, even remotely related to the term 'religion' in the sense that term is universally understood today.

In this context, the term *pārshada* that occurs in the inscriptions of the Mauryan king Asoka is particularly illuminating. It occurs, for instance, in the XIIth Rock Edict (Shahbazgarhi version) and the XIIIth Rock Edict (Shahbazgarhi and Kalsi versions) and the term is usually taken by the learned epigraphists to mean 'people following particular doctrines or different religious sects'. D. C. Sircar has translated the relevant passage in the XIIth Rock Edict as follows:

And the growth of the essentials of Dharma among men is possible in many ways. But its root lies in regard to speech, which means that there should be no extolment of one's own sect or disparagement of other sects on inappropriate occasions and that it should be moderate in every case even on appropriate occasions. On the contrary, other sects should be duly honoured in every way on all occasions.

If a person acts in this way, he not only promotes his own sect but also benefits other sects. But, if a person acts otherwise, he not only injures his own sect, but also harms other sects.¹¹

The relevant passage in the XIII the Rock Edict of the Kalsi version is translated as follows:

Excepting the country of the Yavanas, there is no country where these two classes, viz the *brāhmanas* and the *sramanas*, do not exist; and there is no place in any country where men are not indeed sincerely devoted to one sect or other.¹²

If there was no 'institutional religion either singular or plural' in early India, how can then there be sects? It may not also be appropriate to interpret the two groups namely the *brāhmanas* and the *sramanas* as representing two 'isms' because they do not represent a single unit or entity either theoretically or practically.¹³ In this context, it is worth noting that D. C. Sircar has pointed out that the term *pārshada* literally means 'a member of a society or assembly'.¹⁴ The term *pārshada* may therefore be taken to mean 'a member of a community'. This is, I think, is rather important and illuminating.

We, the historians, working on the religious traditions of early India are generally accustomed to look upon 'religions' within a fixed pattern in which these are dealt with under neat 'isms' such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Ajivikism, or Sikhism' or, worse still Vedism, Brahmanism, Pauranic Hinduism, Saivism, Vaisnavism, Saktism and so on. We also tend to see religion as one of the many variables that is prone to changes owing to what happens in other spheres of human activities such as social, economic, political, and so on. This has prompted many of us to engage ourselves very seriously with the questions of origin and development or decline of particular 'religions'

If we are ready to change our mindset that seeks to segment indigenous religious traditions, as we do in our academic departments, into neat 'isms' and if we lend our ears sympathetically to the contents of the Asokan inscriptions, the religious tradition of the people need not necessarily be studied or understood in terms of a fixed pattern of systems or 'isms'. On the contrary, one may try, however difficult an exercise it might be, to understand the faith that lives in and moves the persons who belong to one community or the other. After all, it is the renewal of faith by the people in each new generation that sustains and makes a tradition survive and flourish and not the other way. How does then one go about it?

Here again Smith shows us an alternative path. According to him, when we talk of the history of a religion in particular, or religions in general, we are dealing with, and often mixing, two separate realms that require two separate concepts. Smith calls one of these realms as 'faith' (it stands "for an inner religious experience or involvement of a particular person; the impingement on him of the transcendent, putative or real.") and the other as 'cumulative tradition' (it means "the entire mass of overt objective data that constitute the historical deposit, as it were, of the past religious life of the community in question: temples, scriptures, theological systems, dance patterns, legal and other social institutions, conventions, moral codes, myths, and so on; anything that can be and is transmitted from one person, one generation, to another, and that an historian can observe.")¹⁵ The realm of 'faith' is internal, personal, subjective, and non-historical as it involves emotional experience of individuals; the realm of 'cumulative tradition' is, in contrast, external, collective, objective, and wholly historical. These two realms are not, however, unrelated to each other for the "link between the two is the living person". It is worth noting here that Ninian Smart, another

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well-known authority on Religious studies, too, while setting out a seven part scheme for the study of religions, speaks of two realms namely 'para-historical' which involves the study of doctrinal, mythological, and ethical aspects and 'historical' which deals with the ritual, experiential, institutional, and material aspects of a given religion.¹⁶

The inner faith of the individuals often find its graphic expression or manifestation in oral or visual forms, for instance, in the soul-stirring hymns of the devotional saints, in the varied classical and folk music and dance forms and in the aesthetically executed paintings and sculptures. This inner faith or religious experience or involvement as noted already, may be internal, subjective and non-historical but the particular persons undergoing the experience are historical persons. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind what Smith is insistent about: "... the mundane traditions persist only in so far as they are refreshed, each generation anew, by the faith of each of the participants; and that this faith, being personal, is not confined to what lies within history. The cumulative tradition is wholly historical;"¹⁷

It may therefore be useful, instead of focusing upon the 'system', to try to understand the prime concern of the community at large that cumulatively sustained and nurtured the different traditions, age after age. Or, to put it differently, what was the fundamental issue that, to borrow the expression that W. C. Smith advocates, the various traditions of 'faith' (or to employ a native expression, *sampradaya* of India) placed before the adherents? Was/Is there any single issue or question that lay at the root and thus constituted the central concern of the cluster of faiths of India?

Glimpses of answers to these questions are partially revealed in the inter-faith and intra-faith debates concerning the native traditions of India. In the so called 'religious' traditions of the subcontinent, neither God nor Soul constitute an essential component; both are in fact eminently disposable entities in some of the major philosophical traditions or within the branches of one and the same tradition in India. The Theravada Buddhists, for instance, believe neither in god or soul whereas the Mahayana Buddhists are theists at least in a limited sense of the term. The Jains are neither theists nor atheists but are sometimes hailed as trans-theists because the Jains accept gods but no Supreme God and hold the *tirthankaras* who were all historical persons, superior even to gods. The *Sāṃkhya* tradition is non-theistic and in the classical Yoga tradition (of Patanjali), God (Ivara) is not god in the theistic sense of the term but is one who has a more practical value as an exemplar. The self-proclaimed followers of Vedanta or the *uttara mīmāṃsa* tradition could, without any fear of contradiction, be followers of either absolutism or monism (as claimed by the followers of Adi Sankara) or qualified monotheism (as claimed by the followers of Ramanuja) or unqualified dualism (as claimed by the followers of Madhya).¹⁸

There is however one issue which all—or nearly all—traditions of India treat as indispensable, i.e., the issue of *karma*. There is only one major school of thought—the Cārvāka or the Lokāyata—which does not take any cognizance of not only the theory of

karma but also the existence of soul or god. The Cārvāka is thus a case of exception that proves the general rule. Although the theory of *karma* is accepted by all the major traditions, they do not all understand it in the same manner. Each tradition has its own way of looking at the question and of explaining it. But the very fact that the concept remained the central concern in all traditions of India underscores on the one hand the unity that bounded all these traditions and provides us, on the other hand, valuable insight into the generative root of Indian religious thought. It can be argued, for instance, argued that this concern is the manifestation of the fundamental anthropocentric character of Indian 'religious' thought.

The various traditions of India are in general agreement that the goal of life is—or should be—to get oneself rid of the cycle of *karma* to which all animate beings, and according to some traditions, even inanimate objects are subjected to. And, all the traditions seek to address and answer the question of how to get oneself rid of the cycle of *karma* or how to conduct oneself in life-in-this world from their own perspective. The answers offered are varied and there are as many answers as there are traditions. Nevertheless, the answers provided by the traditions, though varied, fall within a single spectrum. At one end of the spectrum we find a cluster of *sramana* religions which advocate complete withdrawal or renunciation from all social bondage as a precondition for liberation and at the other end of the spectrum we find a set of *tāntric* traditions which glorify involvement even in acts of sensual pleasure as a mode of ritual path to liberation. In between the two ends we have at least two other very important strands of religious tradition namely the sacrificial ritual (*yajna*) tradition based on the Vedas and carefully nurtured by the brahmins of the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* school and the proponents of the path of devotion or the *bhaktimārga*, both advocating a middle path between the *sramana* mode and the *tāntric* mode. There are vital differences between the tradition of the sacrificial ritual tradition and the devotional tradition. But the notion of sacrifice is very much present in the *bhakti* mode; it is, however, internalized by insisting upon a complete and voluntary surrender to the 'other'.

The primacy accorded to the theory of *karma* by nearly all traditions led them to a perception in which the physical world and life in it are seen as legitimate setting for achieving the goal of life and this constitutes perhaps the second fundamental character of Indian 'religious' thought. Even in the case of *advaita vedānta* in which the phenomenal world is ultimately perceived as unreal or illusory, the reality of the phenomenal world is not denied; only its ultimacy is denied. In the scheme of *advaita Vedānta*, it is possible to attain *mokṣa*, while one is still living in this phenomenal world and attain the reified status of a *jīvanmukta*. Since it denies ultimacy to the phenomenal world, it also places knowledge of the phenomenal (*vyavahāra*) at a level lower than the knowledge of the supraphenomenal (*paramārtha*).¹⁹ At any given point of time in history, millions are there and will be there who are far from free from *karma* and for them, the *karmakāṇḍin*, the

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knowledge of the phenomenal, though imperfect and limited it is, is the necessary path through which revelation of truth gradually and ultimately takes place. This position of the *advaita Vedānta* is strikingly similar to the central teachings of the *mādhyaṃika* school, propounded by the celebrated Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna who says:

There are two truths, on which Buddha's teaching of Dharma depends, one is empirical (*samvṛti-satya*) and meant for the ordinary people, another is the transcendental or the absolutely true one (*paramārtha-satya*). Those who do not know the distinction between these two kinds of truth, cannot understand the profound mystery of Buddha's teachings.²⁰

Not only for Buddha and Sankaracharya, but also for the Jains and for the proponents of Sankya school, the goal of human life—i.e. *nirvāṇa*, *mukti*, *mokṣa*—is achievable in this life and in the mundane world. But all see it as the ultimate unity, eternal peace and freedom. The *bhakti* mode does not deny the existence of such a destination. But it only asks the question why all should be expected to strive for it? Would it not be a boring, lonely existence eternally? The proponents of *bhakti* tradition are therefore forthright in declaring that what they long for is not *mukti* or *mokṣa* but the bliss of union with the other *here* and *now*. Let me cite a couple of examples. Addressing the Lord, Sankaradeva (A.D. 1449-1568), the great saint-poet of Assam says: "I desire no happiness and I have no need for salvation. Let me only love thy feet."²¹ Nearly three centuries before him, Cekkilar, a great poet of the Chola period and celebrated author of the *Tittondar Purāṇam* ('Account of the holy servants'), popularly known as the *Periya Purāṇam*, defines a *bhakta* (*tondan*) in his work as follows: "Apart from worshipping with unifying love, these heroes seek nothing else, not even salvation (*Vitu*)."²²

If it is possible to attain liberation while one is living in this mundane world, then there is every justification for human beings to celebrate life in this physical world to their heart's content. In such an atmosphere, there may be groups which entertain the notion that all animate and inanimate objects in the world were not created by God (for, as stated already, God is not an indispensable entity in Indian thought). But men and women who believe in the *bhakti* mode are far from hesitant in not only constructing and reconstructing old and well-circulated gods but also generating altogether new ones to address the changing needs of their particular communities or segments in the society. Operating through communities, the *bhakti* mode thereby regenerates and rejuvenates itself time and again dictated by the demands of specific space and time. It is therefore not surprising that it can and does speak in different voices in different contexts. Depending upon the context, it can be a voice of change; or, a voice of conformism; or, a voice of legitimation; or, a voice of dissent; or, a voice of affirmation of codes; or, a voice of rejection of tradition. And, this defined the heterogeneous character of the tradition of *bhakti*. The observation of K. N. Panikkar made in a slightly different context seems apt here:

The heterogeneity covered a very wide spectrum: the creative and philosophical realms, on the one hand, and everyday cultural practices of the people, on the other. It gave rise to a variety of cultural processes—synthesis, assimilation, acculturation and eclecticism and more importantly, the way people lived. It is arguable that what really happened was not any one of these processes, but a combination of all in varying degrees, which imparted to Indian culture the quality of a colourful mosaic. One of the implications of this process was the immense cultural variety within religious communities in terms of everyday cultural practices and creative expressions. In other words, religious communities were synonymous with cultural communities.²³

The *bhakti* tradition in early India has been a subject of study in recent years by scholars from diverse fields such as philosophy, anthropology, literature and, of course, religious studies. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the *bhakti* or devotional mode of faith constitutes the better and wider part of what continues to be called Hinduism at the popular level. The impact of the *bhakti* or devotional mode is also conceded in varying degrees among the votaries of what are recognized in our text-books as ‘non-Hindu’ religions in India namely the Mahayana Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and so on. But, has historians worked out an effective methodology that would adequately use the enormous material and address the complex phenomenon called, the *bhakti* mode? While describing the approach to the study of culture by D. D. Kosambi as critical and innovative that heralded a new turn in Indian historiography, K. N. Panikkar also laments that after D. D. Kosambi, “Cultural issues hardly attracted attention and when they did, their treatment suffered either from reductionism or empiricism.”²⁴

I shall conclude by quoting extracts from an editorial titled ‘Birth of A Goddess’ published in the newspaper *The Telegraph* dated 30 October 2010 that represents the most recent manifestation of an old phenomenon in the realm of *bhakti* tradition.

...a new goddess called the ‘English Devi’ is born in the country’s most populous, politically complex and notoriously backward state ... The *devi*’s home is a temple built by a local educational trust in the predominantly Dalit village of Banka in the Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttarpradesh, ...The steps leading to this goddess’s shrine resemble the keyboard of a computer; the deity herself stands on the monitor and resembles the Statue of Liberty. She wears wide-brimmed hat ...and holds a giant pen in one hand and the Indian constitution in the other. On the screen of her monitor-pedestal shines the Buddhist *cakra*; the inner walls of her temple are engraved with the symbols and formulae of the modern sciences and with wise English sayings.

...this Dalit Statue of Liberty (through the English language) would have been inaugurated on Lord Macaulay’s birthday, this month, had the temple construction been completed on time. Yet, colonial history is inextricable from Dalit activism in the person of this divinity. She embodies B. R. Ambedkar’s own educational achievements in India,

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and then in such institutions as Columbia University (hence the Statue of Liberty?) and the London School of Economics, together with his pioneering role in the education of Dalits. ...

Yet, in spite of her halo in history, the English Devi of Banka village is a stridently contemporary icon. She rubs shoulders with those astronomically expensive civic idols built by her earthly sister, the no-less-iconic chief minister of the state in which both women hope to work their powers. What were Home and World for the Tagores in the last century, are Local and Global in this one.

Notes

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3. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *TMAEOR*, p. 56.
4. Louis Renou, 1953, *Religions of Ancient India*, London, p. 48.
5. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *TMAEOR*, p. 50.
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8. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, 1962, *The Evolution of Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, Calcutta, Preface.
9. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *TMAEOR*, pp. 65-66.
10. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *TMAEOR*, p. 258, note no. 55 for Chapter-III.
11. D.C. Sircar, 1975, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, Third Edition (Revised), p. 49.
12. D.C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
13. Romila Thapar, *Interpreting Early India*, Delhi 1993. p. 63
14. D.C. Sircar, 1965, *Select Inscriptions Bearing on Indian Culture and Civilization*, Vol-I, Calcutta, p. 32.
15. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *op.cit*, pp. 156-157.
16. [www.wapedia.mobi/en/Ninian Smart](http://www.wapedia.mobi/en/Ninian_Smart).
17. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 161.
18. Cf. M. Hiriyanna, 1993, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, p. 25.
19. Ramakrishna Pulikandla, 2008, *Fundamental of Indian Philosophy*, (Indian Edition, Fourth impression), New Delhi, p. 277.

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20. *Māidhyamika-sāstra*, Chapter 24, *Kārikas* 8-9 cited in S.C. Chatterjee and D.M. Datta, 1984, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, Eighth Reprint Edition, p. 146.
21. Cited by R.K. Dasgupta in www.atributetosankaradev.org
22. Cekkilar, *Tiruttondar Puranam*, I.4.8, II.3-4.
23. K.N. Panikkar, 2008, 'Culture as Site of Struggle' General President's Address, 69th Session of the Indian History Congress, Kannur, pp. 21-22.
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Blurring the Boundaries: Movement and Migration at the Cross Roads of Asia (c.5th century BCE—c.3rd century CE)

SUCHANDRA GHOSH

Introduction

Early South Asia had ill defined, un construed boundaries through which men and merchandise moved which perhaps do not tally with what we understand by migration today but very well fits in with the dictionary meaning ‘to move from one country, locality or place to another’. Here an attempt will be made to understand the kind of movement that took place through the porous borders of the Indo-Iranian borderlands which one would like to call the cross roads of Asia.¹ (Errington & Cribb, 1992). It appears to be the most befitting expression to convey a wider geographical horizon extending from Afghanistan to Northwest India which from a long time formed the focal point for travellers, monks, merchants and political personalities. The movement of political personalities towards the borderlands and northwest India from the west has been viewed as ‘invasion’ and thereby treated as an assault to the subcontinent’s unity. This kind of intrusion in the form of invasion in the historiography dates back to the coming of the Aryans, which was often termed as ‘Aryan invasion’. In a recent publication, the routine characterization of any people whose origins lie to the west of Pakistan as “foreign” to South Asia and their large scale movements toward the southeast as “invasions” of the subcontinent has been rightly questioned. (Asher and Talbot, 2008:7). We can reiterate with Asher and Talbot that the historical interconnections between the present countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India should not be lost sight of.

Though the paper would concentrate on the context of movement and migration from regions to the north of the Hindukush from around the coming of the Achaemenids to the Kushāṇas, it would also discuss the outward movement of the people from the subcontinent focusing on the Karakorum Highway.

Political Backdrop

The Achaemenian ruler Cyrus annexed the trans Indus territories in the sixth century BCE. This Persian influence continued as Cyrus’ successors, Darius and Xerxes, expanded into the Punjab. However they never crossed the Sutlej and their control waned by the third quarter of the fourth century BCE. Well maintained networks of roads connected Achaemenid centres in Iran with the eastern provinces in Bactria, Gandhara and Sindh. In 330 BCE, the Greeks, under Alexander, also moved towards the Punjab. They crossed the Indus in 326 BCE and made it as far as the Beas river. However the Greeks also never crossed the Sutlej. With the coming of the Mauryas this area came under the

domination of an indigenous power. Following the disintegration of the Mauryan empire in around 185 BCE, the Bactrian Greeks, later on called the Indo-Greeks, the Saka-Pahlavas and the Sakas controlled parts of the crossroads. The Kushāṇas however exercised dominance over the whole of this region and politically unified the area under discussion. This region was always culturally closer to the west than to the east.²

The Geographical Landscape

With this brief political backdrop we move on to the question of interaction between our area of study and Central Asia or West Asia. For this, it will be worthwhile to look at the geography of the crossroads. In the first place we have to remember that this zone had a heterogeneous identity, which accommodated variations. The Indo-Iranian borderlands, an integral part of the cross roads, was virtually the only overland access to the Indian subcontinent from the west. Within this area, there were many sub-areas, which geographically contributed in the migration of people or invasion of rulers to the east. One such important area was Bactria. Its agricultural potential as a result of the irrigational schemes, transit trade in raw materials and contacts with the land south of Hindukush made it a very coveted centre. As it had relatively open border towards the deserts and steppes of Central Asia in the northwest it was easy for the people from northwest to swoop down and proceed further southeast. In the southeast or rather east of Bactria was the region of Tukharistan. The interregional significance of Tukharistan was based on its position north of the Hindukush passes, connecting the Bactrian plains and the steppes of Central Asia with the Kabul valley and beyond. Most of the lands were suitable for pastoralism, offering the opportunity to search for fresh pasture grounds in the mountains each summer and to spend the winter in the comparative shelter of the low lying river valleys. Via these migrations, the pastoralists of ancient Tukharistan came into contact with people from south of the Hindukush who often migrated from the south towards the same grazing grounds in the mountains visited by their northern friends (Vogelsang, 1992: 59,62,75) Thus the boundary line between regions to the north and south of Hindukush were extremely fluid and mutual contacts must have been intensive. Further south, the valleys and plains along the course of the Kabul river has always constituted an important thorough-fare for contacts between east and west. The Kabul river, before it reaches the valley of Peshawar, not far to the north of the famous Khyber pass, it flows through the district of modern Jalalabad, ancient Nagrahāra. It is bounded in the south by the formidable Safed Koh mountain range. The land around Jalalabad was used as winter pasture grounds by the nomads who during the spring move north, across the Hindukush watershed to the alpine pasture of Badakshan. It is to be noted here that though the Khyber Pass is at present the most important thorough-fare between the subcontinent and the west, in the past there may be other passes in this area which were equally important. Alexander often by passed this pass. Makran was important and when the south western flanks of the

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Punjab, were better watered Multan and the Tochi and Gomal routes were correspondingly more significant. The valley of Peshawar is a great oasis in the generally arid northwest. The fans of the perennial streams must always have attracted settlements. It was a most important centre of Graeco-Buddhist culture.

The cross roads was a region of strong contrasts. Beyond the mountainous terrain it is hemmed in by expanses of desert: the Qara Qum and Qizil Qum to the north; the deserts of Iran and Seistan to the west and south-west and the Thar desert of north-west India to the south east. There were also high mountain passes such as the Khunjerab, pass high in the Karakoram mountains on the road from Gilgit in Pakistan to Yarkand in Chinese Turkestan. (Errington and Cribb, 1992:1) Desert not only separate but also connect. Conditions along the fringes of these deserts are more or less same and it has been seen that similar subsistence pattern of marginal agriculture mixed with nomadic animal husbandry continued in this area for a long time. Thus the cross roads as a physical space embraced diverse geographical markers. This was a region 'sans frontier' and so there were unrestricted exchanges between cultures and this fostered change.

Ethnic composition of the region

It can be said that migration shaped the demographic, social and political dynamics of a region as it was a major medium of interaction between civilizations. It played a critical role in the transformation of Northwest India into a poly-ethnic area. The Epico-Puranic literature refers to ethnic groups like *Gandhārīs*, *Kāmbojas*, *Bāhlikas*, *Yavanas*, *Kekayas*, *Pahlava*, *Śakas*, *Daradas*, *Lampakas*, *Pāradas* and many others who inhabited this space. A brief description of some of these tribes as depicted in the Epics and Puranas will be in place. (Thaplyal 1979; Ukil, 2006).

The *Gandhārīs* or *Gandhāras* occupied the eastern and western banks of the Indus, mainly the area around the Peshawar and Rawalpindi districts of Pakistan. It formed a part of the Persian empire under Cyrus. It was later on incorporated into Alexander's territory in the northwest. The Mahābhārata is full of references about the *Gandhāras*. The heterogeneous customs and practices of the *Gandhāras* and the unique development of a new school of art in this region was the resultant effect of intimate contact with the west. Buddhism was a strong presence here. Eventually in the Mahabharata, they are regarded as a group who lack in 'śiṣṭāchār' of the Madhyadeśa.³

Kāmbojas are given an important position in the epics. Their territory was contiguous to the land of Gandhāra on one side and Ferghana on the other. This is the reason why Mahābhārata praised them for their horses. We know that Ferghana region was home to blood sweating horses. In their language there was predominance of Iranian words. They were also not looked upon favourably but later on they were brought within the Brahmanical fold by referring to them as offsprings of Sabala, the cow of Vasishṭha.

The *Bāhlikas* are referred to in the Mahābhārata as inhabiting the Punjab region. Probably people from Bactria who came following the Bactrian Greek rulers settled in that region and were given the epithet of *Bāhlika*. (Przylusky 1960 : 7-8). They represent a definite group of immigrants distinguished from the *Yavanas* and *Śakas*. In the epics the *Bāhlikas* or *Vāhikas* are mentioned conjointly and possessed a similar social status and culture.

In the Rāmāyaṇa, the land of the *Kekayas* is placed beyond the river Beas and lay contiguous to the territory of the *Gandhāras*. The Purāṇas ascertain the *Kekaya* lineage from the Anu tribe, who were Iranians.

The *Daradas* were living in the upper Indus valley now called Dardistan. The epics refer to the gold of the Darada country. They perhaps had a script, which is mentioned in Lalitavistara as Darada lipi. They were no Indian people, did not speak an Indian language but already were under the influence of Indian culture. (Fussman, 1982 : 22).

Lamghan, north east of Kabul, in present Afghanistan was the ancient land of the Lampakas. They are categorized as a rude mountainous people. We have Aśokan inscriptions written in Aramaic from Lamghan. This suggests that they were Aramaic-speaking population. Purāṇas label them as Mlechchhas like many others.⁴

Numismatic evidence testifies to the existence of a tribe or a territory called Parata in the Jhelum district in the 3rd.-4th. century CE. It appears that the kingdom in question came into existence after the decline of the Kushāṇa power in North-Western India. They are referred to in the Epico-Purāṇic literature along with the Śakas, Pahlavas and so on. Originally they were a branch of the Median people. A section of them perhaps migrated to the Indian borderlands after traversing areas in Persia, Transoxiana, Seistan and other areas. (Mukherjee, 1972, 66) The reason for migration of the Pāradas might have to be situated in the context of their interest in trade. The pressure of the growth of population in any one of their small habitats and perhaps consequent shortage of food would also have forced some people to search for a new home. Political factors cannot be ruled out altogether. Wherever they went they had their government whenever they occupied a territory. They had their own coinage. As they were ruling over a small territory their presence did not create any ripple in the political history of the period. They belonged to an ethnic group quite distinct from the Śakas, Pahlavas etc. and were later on merged in to the Indian society.

Thus the region under discussion was home to these people having distinct ethnic identity. They lived in contiguous territories, their boundaries overlapping. Some of them were the indigenous inhabitants of the region, some migrated from beyond the Hindukush but all of them together created a kind of cosmopolitan ambience which is hard to encounter in other parts of the subcontinent. Achaemenid subjugation infused Iranian cultural elements among the people. Intrusion of Hellenism in the area added another dimension

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to the cultural practices of these people and so their social norm was far from what was expected to be in the Gaṅgā valley.

Apart from them we have the Yavanas, Śakas, Pahlavas and Kushāṇas who entered into the subcontinent with a political design. They were so called invaders but their invasion could be related to ethnic movements. The leaders of these ethnic groups exercised political control and then got acclimatized in that society. The question that needs to be asked is that with continuous ethnic movements in this zone did the indigenous people mentioned above consider the Yavanas, Sakas and Pahlavas as foreigners? For them they were perhaps like any other political power taking control of parts of the region just as the Achaemenids, the Greeks and the Mauryas to some extent did.

Outward Movement from South Asia along the Karakorum and Upper Indus:

Parallel to Central Asian intervention in the area and period of our study, another kind of movement was happening along the Karakorum mountains and the upper Indus valley. This was an outward movement from South Asia and could be related to trade, religion or travel. A brief description of this zone would be in order. This region forms an important geo-cultural zone, which is posited, between the highlands of central Asia and northwestern India. The Karakorum Range is bounded on the northeast by the edge of the Tibetan plateau and on the north by the Wakhan corridor and the Pamir mountains. To the immediate west of the Karakorum lies the Hinduraj range, beyond which is the Hindu-Kush range. The southern boundary is formed by the Gilgit, Indus and Shyok rivers, which cut through the mountain barriers to create a deep valley, linking the Tarim basin, Sinkiang and Tibet with the plains of the Punjab. Here, in the area of the valley extending from Indus Kohistan to the districts of Gilgit and Baltistan concentration of huge number of petroglyphs were found. Along with those images numerous inscriptions, written in Kharoshṭī, Brāhmī, Sogdian, Bactrian, Proto Sāradā, Chinese and Hebrew have been located and studied by scholars. (Dani, 1983) Altogether the inscriptions cover the time between the second century BCE and ninth century CE, for this paper we are restricting ourselves till third century CE. The different styles of drawing petroglyphs and different languages used for writing inscriptions are connected with various waves of artistic, linguistic and historical development in India, Iran, China and Tibet. (Neelis, 45) The presence of different kinds of writing over a long and uninterrupted period is indicative of the fact that this region was used as a passage for pilgrims, merchants and travellers moving between South Asia and Central Asia or China. The route went along the Indus and into the Hunza valley and then branched off towards Samarkand, Tashkurgan and Yarkand thus becoming an offshoot of the silk route. The important sites of the zone are Thalpan, Chilas, Hodar, Oshibat, Thor and Shatial (Parasher, 2005, 27-60). That there was a large influx of people from the Indian subcontinent is clear from the fact that most of the inscriptions are in Kharoshṭī and Brāhmī; Kharoshṭī being the dominant script of Indo-Iranian borderlands

and north-west India and Brāhmī was the common script used throughout the subcontinent. To understand the kind of people traversing this route, one needs to read through the inscriptions and the engravings. About thirty thousand rock carvings reflect early migrations, dynamic changes in artistic patterns and overlaps of indigenous, Indian, Iranian and other religious and cultural spheres. It is also important to gauge the type of political control exercised in the upper Indus valley in the period of our study. In the beginning of the early historical period it was the Achaemenids who held some control over this area. We know that a little before 530 BCE, Cyrus, the Achaemenid emperor of Persia, crossed the Hindu Kush mountains and received tributes from the people of Kāamboja and Gandhāra, Gandhara being the twentieth satrapy. In the opinion of Romila Thapar, 'Achaemenid control over some western parts of Central Asia, as well as over Gandhara, brought the two areas under a single suzerainty, a connection which was to be repeated by various dynasties in subsequent centuries'. (Thapar, 2002 : 157) In spite of Gandhara being a part of the Achaemenid territory, it cannot be confidently said that the regions around Chilas was within their political control. There might have been small chiefdoms ruling independently who surfaces more prominently in the succeeding periods. But cultural influence was definitely felt and this is reflected in the presence of Achaemenid art and Achaemenid figures of mounted warriors. (Jettmar, 1991). Following the Achaemenids, it was Alexander who marched into this area followed by the Seleucids and then the Mauryas. The location of Aśokan edicts written in Kharoshṭī script in Manshera and Shabazgarhi suggests that Kharoshṭī speaking people lived in the north west of India and so logically people writing in Kharoshṭī in the caves belonged to north west of India. In the post Mauryan times the area came under the sway of the Bactrian Greeks who came to be known as Indo-Greeks as they crossed the Hindu Kush and were designated Yavanas in the Indian texts. It should be mentioned here that though we have evidence mainly in the form of numismatic issues of the rule of the Indo-Greeks in the various pockets around the Indus and the Punjab rivers, the upper Indus valley was perhaps beyond their sphere of direct control and influence. No person with Greek name has been recorded nor do we find any inscription written in Greek. A late contemporary of the Indo-Greeks in the northwest were the Śakas. Some Śakas followed routes from Central Asia to north-western India through the mountain valleys of northern Pakistan, while other groups of Śakas came through Afghanistan and western Iran. We learn from Chinese texts that as a result of the Yüeh-chih invasion of the Śaka country in Central Asia, a section of the Śakas migrated through a southern route across the Pamirs into a part of the extreme northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent. The first Śaka invasion of India, which came from the north, resulted in the establishment of a Śaka kingdom in the extreme north west including Swat, Darel, Gilgit and Chilas area by c. 158 BCE. (Mukherjee, 1996, 692). Some Kharoshṭī inscriptions speak of early Śaka dynasties (Fussman, 1980). Patañjali who indicated that

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the Śakas lived outside Āryāvarta situated to the south of the Himavat supports this inference. Though A.K. Narain (Narain, 1957, 135) talked about the plausibility of the use of this route, it was not widely recognized but after these discoveries it is now well accepted that this pathway formed an important artery of communications among the several feeders of the Silk Route. According to Karl Jettmar the appearance of different varieties of Scytho-Siberian animal style suggest that movements like that of the Śakas might have started earlier than the Śaka inroads. It is apparent from the carvings that this art of the northern nomads were not indigenous to the region to suggest a parallel development. They must have reached such places from the steppes by migrants. Images of animals not indigenous to the mountains point towards cultural diffusion. It is quite natural that migrations or movements occurred in phases. It has been pointed out that a later movement took place in the third century CE bringing the tribes to the south that used the so called "Sarmatian" animal style for the decoration of their jewellery. (Jettmar, 1991 : 10-16). There was another group of people who held sway in the regions south of Hindu Kush known as the Śaka-Pahlavas. But they entered this region through Bactria and Arachosia. The political control of the Indus valley was taken over by the Kushāṇas in the coming centuries. The Kushāṇa polity was structured in such a way that there were many local chiefs ruling over respective regions owing allegiance to the Kushāṇa monarch. Under their rule the region from Central Asia to Mathura and even beyond was integrated. It was possible to integrate the Indus valley around Chilas, ruled by the local chieftains, in the network of routes used for trade and pilgrimage. Buddhism flourished under their patronage and the security provided by a single rule helped monks and merchants traverse the rough terrains of the Karakorum. So the connected networks were conducive for the initial spread of Buddhism beyond South Asia. It was possible for the South Asians to move towards Central Asia and China. One must however remember that people from South Asia actually meant a motley group having diverse ethnic origin as shown above. Thus the region of our study experienced a continuous presence of heterogeneous people, expression of heterogeneity dominant in the use of scripts and in their ethnic composition. There was perhaps one commonalty, at least, in the period of our study and that was in the religious sphere. The depiction of stūpa in their varied forms suggests that Buddhism was the common religious belief with the people who were using Kharoshṭī as their script. The earliest engravings of stūpas in the upper Indus valley accompanied by Kharoshṭī writings date from about the first century BCE to first century CE, when Buddhism gained ground in this region through the travellers from north west India. Representations of these early stūpas are characterized by an external simplicity, a relatively squat form and the pronounced dome. Often we find worshippers depicted near the stūpa. In the post Kushāṇa period the depiction of the stūpa is found in a much more embellished form with pilaster, vines, umbrellas, banners etc. (Bandini-Konig et al., 1997, 43-44) Representation of men with horses could also be seen. They are represented in

two different ways. One kind of depiction suggests that they were soldiers. The other portrays them as horse traders coming from Central Asia. Thus apart from the much talked about Silk Road; this route witnessed the transmission of artistic, religious and cultural influences and the development of trade relations between Central Asia and South Asia. The movement was in the form of a continuous stream of people belonging to diverse ethnic group and diverse profession, motivated by economic gain or religious piety or simply by the spirit of adventure, connecting northwestern part of South Asia to China and Central Asia. Karakoram Highway was indeed a melange of trade and pilgrim routes during the period of our study and even after.

Migration of technological tradition

The impact of these interactions could be seen in various fields, the domain of art history and religion to be more precise. But there was another domain that felt the effect of movement of ideas and that is the arena of technological tradition. This area is rather less explored and so we intend to discuss it here with the help of a case study. Our chosen site is Taxila. Archaeological excavations of this site help in a large way to understand the influence. It is one of the few sites about which we have detailed reports and scholars are continuously working on it. (Marshall, 1951).

Interaction of one kind or another between the Indo-Iranian borderlands and the north west of India became more intense in the post Mauryan period. The post-Mauryan period in Indian history can be viewed as a period, which saw the emergence and gradual crystallization of contacts between centers of power in the northwest and other regions of the subcontinent. The productive forces achieved the highest level of development in this period. This is reflected in the archaeological findings from Taxila, which demonstrate a very rich material culture. Minor objects like beads, utensils, jewellery, tools, glass objects etc. found from these sites in their own way betrayed examples of technological understanding.

Taxila is distinguished by its location on the great trade route that linked Gangetic region with the northwest. In fact it is located on the shortest possible way from doab to Central Asia. It was also close to the Hazara hills and so able to command the roads to Kashmir and the upper Indus valley. The site is also distinguished by its agricultural productivity and the central Asian trade added to its prosperity. According to Arrian, 'it was the greatest of all the cities between the Indus and the Jhelum'. (Fussman, 1993, 83-100) Later Taxila was the residence of a Mauryan viceroy and perhaps an important administrative centre of the Indo-Greek kings. Alexander's stay in Taxila was quite short and so the Greek elements in the culture of Taxila were the contribution of the later Greeks.

The greatest influence of the Greeks is seen in the technology of crafts, domestic utensils and in the manufacture of jewellery of various kinds. (Dani, 1986, 86). Thriving

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commerce facilitated the infusion of technical expertise. This is evident from the techniques of granulation and filigree, which are seen in the ornaments discovered from Sirkap. The technique of granulation i.e. the decoration of a gold surface with fine granules was known in Greece and the Near East from a long time. The most perfect examples of patterned granulation at Taxila are to be seen on the amulet containing tooth relic (no. 80) and an amulet case (no.82), both of which date around early 2nd cent. BC. The art of filigree is affected by soldering fine wire to the surface of the metal, the wire being either plain, twisted, plaited into a chain or beaded. Examples of filigree work may be seen in the disk pendants and this method of decorating gold and silver ornaments surely came from the Graeco-Roman world. The semi-precious stones used in jewellery in Taxila were carnelian, chalcedony, agate, onyx, garnet, jasper, lapislazuli, rock crystal and so on. It is understandable that inlaying of gems in ornaments required technological knowledge. What is also noteworthy is that the semi-precious stones used in Taxila for incrustation were the same as those used in Ai Khanum. High technological efficiency in metallurgy has been noticed by Marshall in Taxila. Bronze containing 21-25 percent tin, with little lead but some antimony, was in general use in Taxila for casting domestic utensils, bells, ornamental pieces. In the opinion of A.K. Biswas, 'the Taxilians preferred high tin bronze presumably on account of its easy melting and casting properties' (Biswas, 1996, 255-280). The metal was also easily available from Afghanistan. Interaction with the Grecian world also helped in the development of technology. An important example was an unguent flask obtained from the Greek stratum of Sirkap. Its shape, material and technique indicate its Hellenistic character (flared base, long neck and wide projecting brim). It contains large percentages of tin and lead. The advantages of adding lead was that it made the metal stronger and easier to cast. As early as 4th century BCE a technological breakthrough in Taxila was made and that was the earliest evidence of the use of zinc in the world. From Taxila we also learn about the copper-nickel alloy. It was evidently prepared by the smelting of mixed ores of copper and nickel that are known to occur naturally in the province of Yunnan in China and must have reached India through trade. (Marshall, 1951 : 571) This alloy gave a durable silvery lusture and was used for minting coins by the Indo-Greek kings EuthydemusII, Agathocles and Pantaleon. Perhaps nickel alloys of this kind have not so far been found at any other ancient site in India. As regards the bead industry, it has been seen that there have been technological development in bead industry during the early historical period and Taxila was no exception. Beads of glass, shell, faience, semi-precious stones, coral etc. have been unearthed. Metal wares of Taxila are also very impressive. Sirkap for the first time produced evidence for the use of copper, bronze and silver for household objects. The copper and bronze caskets were all cast and sometimes embossed. Bowls, cups, ladles, spoons, dishes and plates are all made in copper, bronze or lead. (Marshall, 1951, 125). Silver wares show the taste of the class of people who lived

in Sirkap. Taxila has also produced evidence of glass and they were used for bangles as well as for vessels, among which those of particular importance are the translucent flasks. With this brief overview of select finds from Taxila, it is at least understandable that Taxila could boast of a technological knowledge, which was a combination of indigenous and Hellenistic wisdom. This was in reality the character of the cross roads where we had influences pouring in but the local tradition was not altogether forgotten.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is amply clear that the Central Asian intervention in the form of power groups entering into the borderlands and exercising political authority for a few hundred years happened because these people were forced to move east wards by the nomads wrecking havoc in Central Asia. They were strong monarchical powers and were capable of using all the markers of monarchy to enforce their authority over their subjects. Their culture was part of them and so there was cultural adaptation and adoption both by the rulers and the ruled. The association of major powers like the Indo-Greeks, Scytho-Parthians and the Kushanas with the region obviously brought changes in the politico-economic scenario of the time.

Notes

1. The expression 'crossroads of Asia' has been borrowed from a publication by Elizabeth Errington and Joe Cribb.
2. Daniel Merton Michon in an essay entitled 'Mapping the World: Mahābhārata VIII 30 and the Hermeneutics of Place' has emphasized on the cultural divisions of Madhyadesha and Punjab and emphasized that Punjab and Madhyadesha experienced very different development patterns.
3. The texts make it amply clear that the people living within the heart of Madhyadeśa are the most pure and those living outside, particularly in the northwest were impure. Interestingly the region which have become impure was once the home of the Rig Vedic Aryans.
4. Most of the information regarding these ethnic groups has been taken from Thaplyal and Ukil.

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Greece in India : Ancient Indian Attitude Towards Greeks

ATUL KUMAR SINHA

Marking a difference between ancient civilization of India from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, A.L. Basham points out that in each case of the latter there had been an almost complete break with the past where the earliest Europeans to visit India found a culture fully conscious of its own antiquity...a culture which indeed exaggerated that antiquity, and claimed not to have fundamentally changed for many thousands of years... India and China have, in fact, the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world¹ (Basham, 1987, p. 4). This continuous traditionalism has given a historical character to Indian culture making tolerance, acceptability and adoptability for everything 'other' as the characteristic feature of the same and, in turn, has been responsible for the multiculturalism and composite nature of the latter² (Pande, 1981, pp. 18-20; Satchidanand Murty, 1956, pp. 6-9 & Upadhyay, 1973). There is no doubt that in the process of the formation of Indian culture a number of foreign elements had played their roles³ (Thaplyal, 1979; Chaturvedi, 1985; Ray, 1985, p. 743; Sagar, 1992). yet it is a historical fact that most of them could not remain for a long a separate identity and were absorbed in the cultural whole of ancient India in a course of time^{3A} (Arora, 2001, p. 1058). The ancient Indian attitude towards them although was not the same in all the time but, certainly, was not of rejection altogether. It was of testing these elements in due course of time and accepting what was valuable, for it believed in—

viṣādapiamṛtaū grāhyamedhyādapi kāñcanaū,
nīcādapyuttamā vidyā striratnaṁ duṣkulādapi.

an attitude of accepting whatever is good from even a bad source. The present paper makes an attempt to underline the attitude of ancient Indian people towards ancient Greeks who represented a highly developed culture of the ancient west when they came into contact with the Indians owing to the historical and political situations of their times.

The Greeks have been referred to in Indian sources as *Yavana* (or *Yona* in Pali), a word taken in Sanskrit form Persian *Yaunna* used for Ionian Greeks in the court of Persian Kings⁴ (Sircar, 1942, pp. 3, 7, 10 & 12 and Arora, 1995, p. 47) and, although, this term (*Yavana*) is said to have been used in a general Sense, for different peoples such as Romans, Śakas, Kuṣāṇas etc. and especially for Arabs and Moghuls in early medieval and medieval times⁵ (Kalhana, 8.2264; Thapar, 2002, p. 549, 555 fu 66 & Apte 2001, p. 831), there seems no doubt that the early use of the word was exclusively for Greeks as we find mentions of the words Pārsīka, Śaka, Romaka, Tukhāras (for Kuṣāṇas), Cīna, Bāhlikas etc. together with the word *Yavana* in the same text⁶ (*Mahābhārata*, 12.65.13; *Manusmṛiti*, 10.44,

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Harivaṃśa Purāṇa, 14.16.), and it appears not logical that these non-greeks are also referred to by the word Yavana which, without any doubt, was used to denote a greek in the early Indian sources. But the confusion does not end here and the identification of Greeks coming into Indian contact in different periods of time remains still alive despite the fact that 'Yavana' is used as a general term for all of them. It is also to be known if attitude of ancient Indians towards them all was one and the same throughout the early period of Indian history or there were some changes in their attitude in the course of time and, if so, what would have been the causes of those changes?

II

With the stories of the expeditions of *Dionysius* and Herakles's in India⁷ (Arrian, *Indica* 1984, pp. 199-200, 200-202; & Narain, 1980, p. 2) and the establishment of a Greek colony named *Nysā* in the North-Western part of India⁸ (Arrian, *Anabasis*, V.I.II. & Mc. Crindle, pp. 79-81.), the similarities between Vedic and ancient Greek gods and the structural resemblances between the Sanskrit and Greek words resulting into the development of the theory of common Indo-European origin of the both cultures as suggested by the early European Idelogists⁹ (Arora, 1996, p. 11, fn. 7; & Verma, 2008, pp. 212-213), some seemingly similarities between Homeric work and Indian epic, a contact between these two ancient cultures of the antiquity has been indicated by a group of scholars but in the absence of a solid historical evidence it is difficult to accept this contact as a historical reality¹⁰ (Arora, pp. 1-2). History speaks for the first contact between ancient Indians and the Greeks in the days of the Persian Empire when both of them were the subjects of the Persian emperors, Greeks in Ionia and Indians in 'Hidu' and 'Gadar'.

It is from Ionia that the word *Yavana* in Sanskrit could develop via Persian *Yaunna*, in the later day¹¹ (Vassiliades, p. 45). Herodotus tells us that India constituted the twentieth province (satrapy) of Persian Empire and it paid the highest tribute of 360 talents gold dust. This information alongwith the descriptions of the gold-digging ants of India by Herodotus again¹² (Roychowdhury, 2004, p. 213; Dube, 1996), would have been spread in the Greek world as the stories of India's prosperity and consequently, the direct contact between them could take place in the form of the invasions of India by Alexander and Seleucus in the later days. Although there is difference of opinion among scholars regarding impact of these invasions on Indian history and culture, yet one cannot deny the fact that the contact between the two developed cultures of the ancient world could, definitely, come to be furthered by it and a base for cultural interaction between them could be founded¹³ (Sinha, 2001, pp. 118-119). This process of interaction got accelerated in the days of the Indo-Greeks or the Bactrian Greeks when they under the leadership of Demetrius and Menander invaded India and reached Pāṭaliputra in their march through Sāket, Pāñchāl and Mathurā as is referred to in the *Yugapurāṇa* section of *Gārgi Saūhita*¹⁴ (Mankad,

1947; Sircar, 1974, pp. 1-17; Mitchner, 1986), Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali¹⁵ (Kielhorn, 1985 3. 2. 11 vide Tripathi, 1977, p. 185 fn) and the Mālvikāgnimitra ū¹⁶ (Tripathi, 2002, pp. 647-648) of Kālidāsa and although they did not stay for long in the Madhyadeśa as Gārgi Saūhitā¹⁷ (*Gargi Sanihila*, verse, 103) speaks yet the life of the people in these areas was greatly disturbed by this event¹⁸ (*Gargi Sanihita*, verse 97-105) and it caused a feeling of bitterness and hatred for them in the minds of Indians which is indicated by the use of words like 'duṣṭavikrānta' and 'yuddhadurmada' for the Greeks¹⁹ (Thaper, op.cit., p. 544) (*Yavana*) but it is also a fact that a new chapter of contact between these two cultures could also open by it and this time in a very direct manner. The Indian attitude for Greeks may, thus, be understood properly when one takes all these phases of contacts between the two as the successive stages of the process of interaction and the most important point in this connection is that the mainland Greece was not, in anyway, involved in this process. Those who represented Greece were Ionians, Macedonians, Hellenistic and lastly the Bactrians and if the earlier expeditions were confined to the bordering regions, the last one affected the life and culture of the Madhyadeśa or the mainland and this fact acted as the most important factor in developing an attitude of ancient Indians for the Greeks, as discussed below.

III

“History has a close relation with psychology just as with geography and economics. Human actions are shaped by the attitudes of bias, prejudice, sympathy or apathy hence, attitudes are the key to the Mind and Culture of a people”²⁰ (Singh, 1991, p. 185 fn. 2) and they are developed under the influence of a specific value-system expressed through the stages of the development of the former. The attitude of ancient Indians toward Greeks may, therefore, be understood in their ‘responses’ with the events of time making the history of the nation. Assuming ‘Yavana’ to be an Indian word, Narain²¹ (Narain, p. 165; Vassiliades, p. 47) has pointed out three derivatives of the same that provide for us a clue to understand the subsequent stages of the development of an attitude of ancient Indian people for Greeks in a historical course of time. Firstly, it is derived from having a sense of ‘keeping away’ averting signifying one who is disliked²² (Williams, 1899, p. 848). In the second place, it is from jyu with a sense of ‘mixing’ or ‘mingling’ implying a mixed people²³ (*Sabdakalpdrumah*, II. 74; Williams, 1874, pp. 246 ff). Thirdly, from the meaning ‘quick’ ‘swift’, a ‘swift horse’ denoting those who have a quick mode of conveyance²⁴ (Williams, 1936, pp. 574 ff). “These derivations,” Writes Narain, “taken together may indicate that the Yavanas were thought of as a mixed people who had a quick mode of conveyance and who were disliked as aliens and invaders”²⁵ (Narain, p. 165). There is no doubt that these derivations are comparatively recent as Narain himself admits²⁶ (Ibid) yet they are important to help one trace ancient Indian view for Greeks despite the fact that this was not the same all the time.

IV

It has already been said that the first Greeks whom ancient Indians came into contact with were Ionian Greeks who, like Indians, were the subjects of Achaemenian Empire. This contact is clearly confirmed by the writings of *Skylax*, and *Ktesias*, and then Hekattius and Herodotus²⁷ (Velissaropoulous, pp. 258-259; Arora, pp. 2-5). But we find no contemporary Indian source to mention even once the Greeks except Pāṇinī a native of Śālātūr in Taxilā, who in his *Aṣṭadhyāyī* states that the feminine form of *Yavana* is *Yavanani*²⁸ (*Aṣṭadhyāyī*, 1987, 4. 1. 49; Dasgupta, vol. 2, 1984). This letter form according to *Kātyāyana* denoted the greek writing *Yavanānillipya ü*²⁹ (*Aṣṭadhyāyī*, Narain, p. 1, fn. 5). Thus *Pāṇinī* seems to be the first Indian source to mention the word *Yavana* for the Greeks of Ionia and his attitude towards them seems to be of neutral type though with a sense of curiosity or inquisitiveness for their script or writings in extended meaning. The second instance of a direct contact between the Greeks and Indians could appear through the invasion of Alexander that formed the brightest part of the Greek history but was completely ignored in Indian sources³⁰ (Sinha, Bareilly, 1991) except a far-fetched reference to 'Alsand' in a late Buddhist text³¹ (*Mahāvaiśya*, p. 194) that seems to be sounding 'Alexandria' indicating its connection with Alexander. Whatever would have been the reasons for this complete ignorance about this most historical event that indirectly made significant effects on the history and culture of India as we have shown elsewhere³² (Sinha), the most important reason was the difference between the value-systems of the two cultures in which if for a Greek development of state and society was the ultimate end of human life, it was attaining the *mokṣa* as the highest end of man for an Indian³³ (Sinha, (ed) Arora, pp. 280-282). It was thus, the difference in the points of view that made stories of the rise and fall of kingdoms and the life-histories of kings and heroes as the central theme of Greek 'history' whereas these were taken as a second-rated achievements in the axiological framework of Ancient Indian Culture that gave primacy to *śreya* over *preya* in the *śreya-preya* dichotomy of Indian value-system and that formed the basis for the development of an Indian attitude for looking at the things³⁴ [Sinha, (ed) Arora, 1997, pp. 77-80]. The Alexander's invasion was followed by Seleucan expedition after about two decades of the former and this also was completely ignored in Indian sources yet the inference made about the result of the war between the forces of Seleucus and Chandragupta Maurya on the basis of Greek sources indicates the beginning of a soft-cornered relation, if not friendship, for Greeks in the heart of Indians in the matrimonial alliance (*epigamia*) between the two and the stay of Megasthenes in the Mauryan court for a long period³⁵ (Roychoudhury, pp. 242-243). This relation seems to be furthered in the time of Bindusara who did ask for sweet wine, dried figs and a philosopher to his Greek contemporary Antiochos of Syria and while fulfilling the demand for the first two things king of Syria refused to send the philosopher for it was not allowed by the rules of his land³⁶ (Ibid, p. 266). Then we find references to the word *yona* (the

Pali form of *Yavana*) in Asokan edicts in which he states that he sent his missions bearing the messages of *dhamma* to the Greek kings, the *Yona rājas*, on the frontiers³⁷ (Smith, 1970, p. 186; Thapar, 1977, pp. 255-256). The issuance of bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Armaic scripts by *Aśoka* for his Greek subject residing in the bordering regions like Kandahār makes us aware of a kingly care of the emperor for foreign subject³⁸ (Thapar, p. 260) which indicates that a softening in relation between two people had already begun and an attitude of appreciation and sympathy was developing by and by. This is important to note at this juncture that after Ionian Greeks, it were Macedonian Greeks who invaded India under the leadership of Alexander and then Hellenistic Greeks with whom Indians came into contact with in the days of the Mauryan rule and although they were all Greeks in origin but culturally they were slightly different from each other on account of their being more and more exposed to the other cultures of the east as the word Hellenistic itself explains.

The next phase of contact between ancient Greeks and Indians was that of the Bactrian Greeks whom a group of scholars prefers to call as Indo-Greek for their being more closely associated with Indian life and culture than their 'Hellenistic' affiliation, as Narain has proved³⁹ (Narain, p. 11), refuting Tarn's declaration of 'fifth Hellenistic State' in Bactria⁴⁰ (Tarn, 1951, p. XX). It is to be pointed out here that whatever image of Greeks is formed in Indian 'historical' memory, it is on account of the Indo-Greeks who, for the first time in the history of Greek invasions in India, not only reached Madhyadeśa or mainland India but could be able to disturb the life and culture of the people for a while⁴¹ (Loc. cit; fn. 18). The use of the word *Yavana* in Indian sources is made mainly for them and hence A. K. Narain, an eminent Indian authority on Indo-Greek study, has used the terms, *Yavana* and Indo-Greek as synonyms⁴² (Narain, p. 6). The invasion of the Indo-Greeks has very loudly been mentioned in the *Gārgisauhiātā* section of *Yuga-Purāṇa* and is also referred to in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali and the *Malavikāgnimitra* of Kālidāsa. It is also echoed in some of the *Purāṇas*⁴³ (*Vāyu Purāṇa*, 1933, 37. 382ff, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 1987, 5. 23; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, V.S. 2033, Vol. II, 10.5. -51; *Harivāṃsa Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 57-58 (ed.) Ramchandra, 1936; Sharma, 1980, pp. 47-51, 58) and the Epics particularly the *Mahabharata* wherein having control over *dasyus* like *Yavana* has been referred to as a great problem for the king⁴⁴ (*Mahābhārata*, 12. 65, 13-16; 102.5.; Lal, 1993, pp. 76-80), As already indicated, the significance of the Indo-Greek invasion lay in the fact that it was for the first time that a foreign force had invaded the 'Madhyadeśa' which was not only a geographical zone but was the land of the development of all socio-religious-cultural pursuits for which this invasion had brought great dangers causing a sense of fear and insecurity in the mind of people⁴⁵ (Sharma, op.cit., pp. 16-48) and we find the use of '*duṣṭavikranta*', '*yuddhadurmadāh*' and '*mleccha*' etc. denoting a feeling of hatred and intolerance that expressed a negative attitude for the Yavanas in the mind of Indian people⁴⁶ (*Mahābhārata*,

1.80.26; 12.65.13; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 9.20.30; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 34. 30.) and it was their natural reaction for those who were responsible for the great disturbance in their life and culture. Though they could not remain there for a long time and they had to return back to their own kingdom for some problematic situations, the chaos in the Madhyadeśa did not cease and those Greeks who stayed there especially in Mathura and adjoining places used to create trouble for the people and state as is clearly shown in the Māndhātā-Viṣṇu dialogue in the Śāntiparva of Mahābhārata⁴⁷ (*Śāntiparva*, 65. 13-16; Roy, 1972, p. 21). Of all the Indo-Greek kings who are known in Indian history, Demetrius and Menander are the most popular, Demetrius for his military expeditions and the Menander for his discussion with Buddhist Nāgasena that resulted into the composition of *Milindapañña*. If military expedition and its after affects caused a sense of bitterness and hatred for the Yavanas indicated through the use of the words like *Mleccha*, *Barbara*, *duṣṭvikrānta*, *Yuddhadurmada* etc., the way of dialogue created, gradually an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding and then also a sense of appreciation in the mind of Indians for Greek wisdom hence despite their being *Mleccha* they came to be called 'Sarvagya'⁴⁸ (*Mahābhārata*, *Kaṇṇaparva*, 30.80) and were considered respectful like sages for their knowledge in Astronomy by Varahmihir⁴⁹ (*Brhatsaūhitā of Varāhamihir*, II. 14; Shastri, p. 435). We also find a feeling of acceptability and adoptability for them in Indian society when Manusmṛiti, Mahābhārata and other texts call them as *Vṛṣala Ksatriya*⁵⁰ (*Mahābhārata*, *Anuśāsanparva*, 33. 19; 35. 17-18; *Manusmṛiti*, 10. 43-44) and the Purāṇas created stories of their Indian origin by connecting them with *Turvasu*, the son of *Yayāti*⁵¹ (*Mahābhārata*, *Ādiparva*, 80.26; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 43.30.). In the Rāmāyaṇa, they are said to have been originated from *Shabala*, the cow of *Vaśiṣṭha*⁵² (*Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bālkāṇḍa*, 54. 21, 55. 23.). Thus, a different attitude of ancient Indians for *Yavanas* seems to have developed with the beginning of the process of intermixing on the social plane alongwith the development of a mutual understanding and an interaction on the various spheres of cultural areas. Although there seems a sort of ambiguity in Indian attitude for Greeks yet taken together all the relevant references in this regard we also find a developmental sequence in the formation of ancient Indian attitude for Greeks 'who came, who saw and India conquered'.

References and Notes

1. Basham, A.L., 1987, *The Wonder that was India*, (7th impression), Rupa Prakashan, New Delhi, p. 4.
2. See, Pande, G.C., 1981, *Bharatiya Parampara ke Mula Svara*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, pp. 18-20; also, Satchidanand Murty, K., 1956, *The Indian Spirit*, Waltair, pp. 6-9, Upadhyay, B.S., 1973, *Feeders of Indian Culture*, Delhi.
3. For details See, Thaplyal U.P., 1979, *Foreign Elements in Ancient Indian Society*, Delhi, Chaturvedi, S., 1985, *Foreign Influx and Interaction with Indian Culture*, Delhi, also Ray, N. R., 1985, 'Some Additional Notes on the Foreign Elements in Hindu Population' in



Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. 4 (Reprinted) Delhi, p. 743; Sagar K.C. 1992, *Foreign Influence on Ancient India*, Delhi.

3A. In case of Greeks Arora writes:

“...Contrary to what happened elsewhere, where Greek rulers had maintained their Hellenic Identity...the Greek kings in India got assimilated to their milieu. Whereas in Egypt and West Asia Greek Kings had followed a policy of Greek Kings had followed a policy of Greek acculturation, in India they themselves were accepted”.

Arora, U.P., 2001, ‘Ancient India and Ancient Greece’ in *Life, Thought and Culture in India (C. 600 B.C. – 300A.D.)* (ed.) G.C. Pande, Vol. I, pt. II, Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture (Gen. Editor D. P. Chattopadhyay), Centre for Studies in Civilization, Delhi, p. 1058.

4. It is *Yaun* (a) ‘*Yauna*’, ‘*yauna*’ in Darios’s inscriptions and ‘*Yauna*’ in Persepolis inscription of Xerxes. All inscriptions are in old Persian Language in cuneiform script. See, Sircar, D.C. (ed.), 1942, *Select Inscriptions-Bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, Calcutta, pp. 3,7, 10 & 12.

It is also said to have been derived from the Greek word (Ionan). It has been suggested that the Indians took the word from the Persians (who originally called Ionian Greeks and later all Greeks *Yaunas*) when they first encountered Greeks on the borders of their country. Vassiliades, Demetrios Th., ‘Traditional View about the Origin of Yavanas’, in *Yavanika*, (ed.) U.P. Arora, 1995, vol. 5, Bareilly, p. 47.

5. *Rājataranginī* of Kalhaṇa, 8. 2264; Thapar, Romila, 2002, ‘Indian Views of Europe; Representation of the Yavanas in Early Indian History’, in *Cultural Past*, Oxford University Press (Ind impression, Delhi, p. 549, 555 fu 66.) Apte, V. S., 2001, *Sanskrit-Hindi Dictionary*, (Reprint), Delhi, p. 831.
6. *Mahābhārata*, 12.65.13; *Manusmṛiti*, 10.44, *Harivarṇsa Purāṇa*, 14.16.
7. Arrian, *Indica*, fragment, VII, VIII (Eng. Tr. J. W. McCrindle) in R.C. Jain (ed.) *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (Reprint), Delhi, 1984, pp. 199-200, 200-202; Arrian records the traditions of Indian invasions of Dionysus and Heracles though he gives more more weight to the Dionysus Sionysu’s invasion. Nein, A.K., *The Indo-Greeks*, (Ind. Ed.) Delhi, 1980, p. 2.
8. Arrian, *Anabasis*, V. I. II., See, Mc. Crindle, J.W., *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, (New Ed.) (Reprint), New Delhi, pp. 79-81.
9. Names of Mueller, George Cox, John Fiske and Gubernatis may be taken to put forward the theory of Indo-European Origin in which it was emphasized that the ancient Indians, Persians, Greeks, Hittities and Romans, Celts, Tutons and other European nations had their common original homeland. In the hymns of the R̥gveda may be seen the roots of many Indo-European Myths. A numbers of linguistic and functional parallels among the deities of Indo-European nations may be seen; Sanskrit deva (God) is the Greek *theos*, Latin *deus*, Lithuanian *dewas*, Irish *dia*, old Persian *diwēs*. Vedic Hymns address the heaven god *Dyaus-Pitar*, *Zeus-Pater* in Greek, *Jupiter* in Latin, *Tius* in German. The Vedic *Varun* is comparable to Greek Ouranos; Surya or Savitr resembles the Greek Helios, and so on. See, Arora, U.P. 1996, *Greeks on India*, Bareilly, p. 11, fn. 7; See also Verma, T.P. 2008,

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- 'Yavana, Saka-Pahalava, Kusana,—They Were not Invaders' in *Sanskriti Sadhna*, Vol. XXI, pt. II, Varanasi, pp. 212-213.
10. Arora, U.P., *op.cit.* pp. 1-2.
 11. Vassiliades, Demetrios, Th., *op.cit.*, p. 46.
 12. Roychowdhury, H. C., *Political History of Ancient India* (5th impression) Delhi, 2004, p. 213, See also, Dube, R. K., 1996, 'An Analysis of Ant's Gold in Ancient India' in *Yavanika*, Vol. 6, Bareilly.
 13. Sinha, A. K., 2001, *Time, Materialism and Historiography; Some Indo-Hellenic Parallels*, Delhi, pp. 118-119.
 14. Gārgi Sāṁhitā, Yugapurāṇa Section (Critical ed.) D.R. Mankad in the *Journal of U.P. Historical Society*, Vol. XX, pt. I & II, 1947; 'Problem of the Yugapurana' in D. C., Sircar, *Studies in Yugapurana and Other Texts*, Delhi, 1974, pp. 1-17; and also Mitchner, J. E., *The Yuga Purana*, Calcutta, 1986.
 15. *Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali* (ed.) F. Kielhorn, 1985, Bombay, 3. 2. 11 vide Tripathi, R. S., 1977, *History of Ancient India* (Reprint), Delhi, p. 185 fn.
 16. *Mālavikāgnimitraū*, Act-V; *Kalidasa-Granthavali* (ed. & Tr.), B. N. Tripathi, 2002, Delhi, pp. 647-648.
 17. ...madhyadeśe na sthāsyanti yavanāḥ...*Yuga Purāṇa Section of Gārgi Sāṁhitā*, verse, 103.
 18. Ibid, verse 97-105.
 19. "...As long as the Yavanas remain along the borders they are tolerated, but when they enter the heartland, then the resentment is uncontrolled..." Thaper, Romila, *op.cit.*, p. 544.
 20. Singh, A. K., 1991, 'The Indo-Greek Disposition' in *Graeco-Indica-India's Cultural Contact with the Greek World*, (ed.) U.P. Arora, Ramanand Vidya Dhawan, Delhi, p. 185, fn.2.
 21. Narain, A. K., *op.cit.*, p. 165; Vassiliades, Demetrios Th., *op.cit.*, p. 47.
 22. See, Williams, 1899, M., *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, p. 848;
 23. *Śabdakalpadrumaḥ*, II. 74; Williams, M., loc. Cit., Mitra R.L., 1874, 'On the Supposed Identity of the Greeks with the Yavanas of the Sanskrit Writers' in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, pp. 246 ff.
 24. Williams, M. loc. cit.; Pisharoti, K. R., 1936, 'A Note on Yavana' in *Indian Culture*, pp. 574 ff.
 25. Narain, A. K., *op.cit.*, p. 165.
 26. Ibid.
 27. See Velissaropoulous, Dimitraos C., 'The Ancient Greek Knowledge of Indian Philosophy' in *Graeco-Indica*, pp. 258-259; also, Arora, U.P., *Greeks on India*, pp. 2-5.
 28. *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (Ed.) otto Bohtlingk, Leipzig, 1887, 4.1.49; Dasgupta, N. N., 1984, 'Panini and the Yavanas' in *Indian Culture*, Vol. 2, (Reprint) Delhi.
 29. Vārtikā 3 on Aṣṭādhyāyī, 4.1.49 vide, Narain, A. K., *op.cit.*, p. 1, fn. 5.
 30. See, Sinha, A. K., 1991, 'Alexander's Invasion and Indian Literature' In *Milind* (ed). U.P. Arora, Bareilly.
 31. *Mahāvaiśya*, Greiger's translation, p. 194.

32. Sinha, A. K., Alexander's Invasion and Indian literature.
33. For details see, Sinha, A. K., 'On the Problem of Cultural Identity (with special reference to ancient Indian and Greek Cultures)' in *Graco-Indica* (ed.), U.P. Arora, pp. 280-282.
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35. Roychoudhary, H. C., op.cit., pp. 242-242.
36. Ibid., p. 266.
37. Major Rock Edict, XIII; Smith, 1970, V.A., *Aśoka*, (3rd Indian Reprint), Delhi, p. 186, Thapar, Romila, 1977, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, (IInd Ed., IInd impression), Delhi, pp. 255-256;
38. Thapar, Romila, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, p. 260.
39. "...The Indo-Greeks were more influenced by Indian religion and though than any Hellenistic king by the faith and ideas of the land in which he lived and ruled... the Indo-Greeks introduced Indian legends in Indian script on their money. Their history is the part of the history of India..."
Narain, A. K., op.cit., p. 11.
40. Tarn, W.W., 1951, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (2nd ed.) Cambridge, p. XX. .
41. loc.cit.; fn. 18.
42. Narain, A. K. op. cit., p. 6.
43. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, (Venkateshwar Press Ed.), 1933, Bombay, 37, 382 ff, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, (ed.) G.N., Shastri, 1987, Calcutta, Śaka, 5. 23; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, (Gita Press Gorakhpur), V.S. 2033, Vol. II, 10.5.51; *Harivaiṣa*, *Viṣṇu Parva*, 57-58 (ed.), Ramchandra Shastri Kunjawadekar, 1936, Poona, See, Sharma, 1980, G. R., *Reh Inscription of Menander and The Indo-Greek Invasion of the Ganga Valley*, Abinash Prakashan, Allahabad, pp. 47-51, 58.
44. *Mahābhārata*, 12. 65. 13-16; 102.5; Lai, S. B., 1993, 'The Yavanas in the Epics' in *Proceedings of the U.P. History Congress*, (ed.) U. P. Arora, VIth Session, Bareilly, pp. 76-80.
45. Sharma, G. R., op.cit., pp. 16-48.
46. *Mahābhārata*, 1.80.26; 12.65.13; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 19.20.30; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 34.30.
47. *Śāntiparva*, 65. 13-16; Roy, B. P., 1972, *Political Ideas and Institutions in the Mahabharata*, Calcutta, p. 21.
48. *Mahābhārata*, *Kaṇaparva*, 30.80.
49. *Bṛhatsaṁhitā of Varāhamihir*, II.14; Shastri, A. M., *India As Seen in the Bṛhatsaṁhitā of Varāhamihir*, Delhi, p. 435.
50. *Mahābhārata*, *Anuśānparva* 33. 19; 35.17-18; *Manusmṛti*, 10.43-44.
51. *Mahābhārata*, *Ādiparva*, 80.26; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 43.30.
52. *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bālakāṇḍa*, 54.21, 55.23.
53. Thapar, Romila, 'Cultural Past', pp. 501-52.

Interesting Foreign Evidence for History of Asceticism in India

SAMARESH BANDYOPADHYAY

It is highly interesting to note that India, a land of saints and seers, has been producing from time immemorial personalities held in high veneration not only by the millions of her population but also by foreigners. As discussed by us in different contexts,¹ the motto of plain living and high thinking, complete indifference and aversion to material good, lofty spiritual ideals and practical realisation of the Upanishadic doctrine of soul and God endowed these personalities with a power, almost inconceivable, and a spirit which enabled them to control their greed of gold, lure of luxury, fear of physical pain and even dread of death. Their wisdom was already held in that respect 'akin to awe' 'at the very dawn of history in Europe'. Exceedingly interesting indeed is to recall in this connection an episode in Alexander's life which not only bears an evidence for the great esteem with which Indian ascetics are always held but also at once places the antiquity of the history of such esteem for ascetics in at least as early as the fourth century B.C.

Hearing about the extraordinary qualities in these people, Alexander, as Strabo (born about 63 B. C.) informs,² sent Onesicritus to learn their wisdom and report it to him. Onesicritus met fifteen of them at a distance of twenty stadia from the city of Taxila and explained the reason of his visit to one of them called Calanus who remarked that "no one coming in the drapery of European clothes"... "could learn their wisdom". "To do that, he must strip naked and learn to sit on the hot stones beside them".³ Being more curious, Alexander arranged to bring to him one of them called Dandamis. Onesicritus, sent by Alexander, approached Dandamis with the words—"Hail to thee thou teacher of Bragmanes. The son of the mighty god Zeus, King Alexander, who is the sovereign of all men, asks you to go to him, and if you comply, he will reward you with great and splendid gifts, but if you refuse will cut off your head."⁴ Dandamis, with a complacent smile, heard him to the end, but did not even lift his head from his couch of leaves and answered scornfully—"God, the Supreme King, is never the author of insolent wrong, but is the creator of light, of peace, of life, of water, of the body of men, and of souls. He alone is the God of my homage, who abhors slaughter and instigates no wars. But Alexander is not God, since he must taste of death; and how can he be the world's master, who has not yet reached the further shore of the river Tiberaboas, and has not yet seated himself on a throne of universal dominion? ... Know this, however, that what Alexander offers me, and the gifts he promises, are all things to me utterly useless, but the things which I prize, and find of real use and worth are these leaves which are my house, these blooming plants which supply me with dainty food, and the water which is my drink, while all other possessions and things, which are amassed with anxious care, are wont

to prove ruinous to those who amass them. cause only sorrow and vexation, with which every poor mortal is fully Irought.”⁵

“But, as for me I lie upon the forest leaves, and, having nothing which requires guarding, close my eyes in tranquil slumber; whereas had I gold to guard, that would banish sleep. The earth supplied me with everything, even as a mother her child with milk. I go wherever I please, and there are no cares with which I am forced to cumber myself, against my wish. Should Alexander cut off my head, he cannot also destroy my soul. My head alone, now silent, will remain, but the soul will go away to its Master, leaving the body like a torn garment upon the earth,⁶ whence also it was taken. I then, becoming spirit shall ascend to my God, who enclosed us in flesh, and left us upon the earth to prove whether, when here below, we shall live obedient to his ordinance and who also will require of us, when we depart hence to his presence, an account of our life, since he is judge of all proud wrong-doing; for the groans of the oppressed become the punishment of the oppressors. Let Alexander, then, terrify with these threats those who wish for gold and for wealth, and who dread death, for against us these weapons are both alike powerless, since the Bragmanes neither love gold nor fear death. Go, then, and tell Alexander this: Dandamis has no need of aught that is yours and therefore will not go to you, but if you want anything from Dandamis come you to him. Alexander, on receiving from Onesicritus a report of the interview, felt a stronger desire than ever to see Dandamis who, though old and naked, was the only antagonist in whom, the conqueror of many nations, had found more than his match.”⁷

The above account is important from various points of view. Besides highlighting the great esteem with which ascetics used to be held not only in Indian society but also by even tough conqueror like Alexander and placing the antiquity of such esteem in the 4th century B.C. to a considerable degree of certainty, as mentioned above, it shows that complete renunciation endows the ascetics with a special power to be indifferent and averse to all material gains of the mundane world—*nisprihasya trinam jagat*. Rightly, therefore, the great German Indologist Max Müller writes—“If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.”⁸

In fact, even much before the beginning of the Christian Era, ascetics in India acquired

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a place unassailable. That is probably why even though Kauṭilya⁹ disapproved a premature renunciation of the world and the obligations of the domestic life without making adequate provision for the dependants and obtaining formal sanction from the legal authorities, “the emphasis laid by Aśoka in his inscriptions on seemly conduct towards Brāhmaṇa and Śramaṇa ascetics and the cultivation of tolerance among the different sects (Pāśhaṇḍas) produces the impression that the evils of sectarian asceticism had by no means abated”.¹⁰ F.W. Thomas observes¹¹ that this state of affairs continued until the *Bhagavadgītā* doctrine that ‘salvation is attainable not by the rejection of civil duty, but in and above the performance of it’ gained good ground and there might have been a little lessening of the acceptance of asceticism until the auspicious advent in 1486 A.D. of Māhaprabhu Śrī Chaitanya, an incarnation of transcendental wisdom and an embodiment of sympathy and compassion. In fact the flood-gate of asceticism was reopened and a few centuries later a distinct contribution to the illumination of the spiritual horizon was made by Bengal where in the nineteenth century, three world renowned organizations of sannyāsīs—Ramakrishna Mission, Gauḍiya Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha—were established and a large number of very bright luminaries appeared in the spiritual horizon. Śrī Śrī Rāmakrishṇadeva was born in 1836 and lived up to 1886, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was born in 1838 and passed away in 1914, Svāmī Vivekānanda was born in 1863 and lived up to 1902, Rishi Aurobindo was born in 1870 and died in 1950, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was born in 1874 and expired in 1937, Ṭhākura Anukulachandra was born in 1888 and died in 1969, Āchārya Pranabananda was born in 1896 and died in 1941 and A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda was born in 1896 and lived up to 1977.

Notes and Reference

1. See our articles (i) ‘Momentous Advent of Śrī Śrī Ṭhākura Anukulchandra—A Historical Analysis’ in the *Śrī Śrī Ṭhākura Anukulchandra Birth Centenary Volume*, edited by H.B. Narayan, 1987, Deoghar (Bihar), pp. 169-171, (ii) ‘Itihāser Prekshāpāṭe Svāmī Praṇabānanda’ (in Bengali) in the *Pranab*, 1399 B. S., Phalguna, pp. 414-417 and (iii) ‘Momentous Advent of Śrīlā Prabhupāda’ in *Thoughts on Synthesis of Science and Religion*, edited by T.D. Singh and Samaresh Bandyopadhyay, 2001, Calcutta, pp. 7-33. Cf also Samaresh Bandyopadhyay, 1974, *Early Foreigners on Indian Caste System*, Calcutta, pp. 6-9.
2. R.C. Majumdar, 1960, *The Classical Accounts of India*, Calcutta, pp. 276-277.
3. *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I—Ancient India*, edited by E.J. Rapson, 1962, Second Indian Reprint, New Delhi, p. 321.
4. R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 444-446.
5. *Loc. cit.*

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6. Cf. *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā*, II. 22; *Mahābharata*, XII. 15.57.
7. R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 446.
8. *India—What can it teach us?* Third Impression of the Paperback Reprint, 2005, Calcutta, p. 5.
9. *Arthaśāstra*, II, 1.
10. Cf. A. *Comprehensive History of India, Vol. II—The Mauryas and Sātavāhanas* (325 B.C.—A.D. 300), edited by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1957, Calcutta, p. 67.
11. *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I*, cited above, p. 437.

Remarks on the Geographical definition of the Gandhāran Buddhist Sites

JESSIE PONS

The present article is a modest contribution to Gandhāran studies and is an abstract of a Ph.D. research on the various schools of Gandhāran Buddhist art. The desire to tackle such a topic rose from the fact that a global understanding of the Gandhāran artistic centres was lacking. Neither a systematic nor a concise one existed to our knowledge. We now understand why. The reasons for this gap's existence were pertinently exposed by W. Zwalf. In the introduction to the catalogue of the British Museum's Gandhāran collection, the author stresses upon the difficulties the student of Gandhāran art is faced with:

... serious interest has to contend with the archaeological intractability of the remains. Sites are always in ruins, sculpture is rarely in position and many sites, as against the few properly explored have undergone ignorant modern digging, unscrupulous pillage and dispersal of the finds; ... the lack of securely datable objects and buildings and the uncertain history of the epoch and the region... Much sculpture has been published and documented but knowledge of it and access are uneven; museums in Pakistan not surprisingly contain unexplored reserve collections (Zwalf 1996: 21).

We do not wish to persuade against undertaking any further stylistic study of Gandhāran Buddhist art, however, there is another obstacle overlooked by W. Zwalf: the identification of archaeological sites. Indeed, how can one truly assess the archaeological potentiality of a site when placing it on a map proves difficult? We believe that it is worthwhile to dedicate a few words to this puzzling issue.

The expression "identification" refers to the designation of the archaeological site by a name and to its precise geographical connotation. Utter confusion prevails on the matter and the reasons are diverse. First, a site is sometimes referred to by its proper name, sometimes by the name of the modern city or town next to which it lies. Then, a single name can point to several sites. Finally, some of the sites mentioned in bibliographical, epistolary or photographic sources have now disappeared and finding their exact position is unfeasible. Thus, often, the primary and secondary evidence cannot be juxtaposed. This leads to the use of misnomers and dubious terminologies. Thus, the information the student can draw from the various sources does not always make sense on the ground and the terminology subsequently used in his study is bound to be misleading. We wish to devote a short paragraph to the sites whose vague and ill defined (inexact) definitions need to be specified.

Rāni Ghat and Naogram

In his reports of 1870 and 1875, A. Cunningham indicates that the name "Rāni Ghat"

refers to a hill on top of which rises a fort that he had explored in 1848 and at the foot of which small mounds yielding Buddhist remains discovered by Captain Schorrt between 1861 and 1863 are located (Cunningham 1871: 117; Cunningham 1875: 55-56; Löwenthal 1861: 411-413). He also states that the name “Naogram” designates the modern village north of which the Rāni Ghat hill rises as well as the ruins themselves. The interchangeable use of these two names in publications referring to the same ruins is misleading and, therefore, for practical reasons and scientific precision, only one name should be accepted. A letter written in 1863 by Reverend I. Löwenthal in which he lists the sculptures given to the Peshawar Museum by Captain Schorrt should help to make the point. The author explicitly reports that Buddhist pieces were found on the hill of Rāni Ghat, next to Naogram (Löwenthal 1863: 6; Errington 1987: 100-101) Rāni Ghat being directly associated to the Buddhist remains, only this name should be used. The number of pieces which can be attributed to Rāni Ghat with certainty is limited to I. Löwenthal’s list, only nine of these being firmly identified by E. Errington (Errington 1987: 100-101), and also the finds discovered during the Japanese excavations conducted at Rāni Ghat between 1982 and 1998 (Nishikawa 1986 and 1988; Odani 2001). Henceforth, no other sculptural specimens could be attributed to this site on solid grounds.

Gumbat

The use of the name “Gumbat” is particularly misleading. At the end of the XIXth century, A. Stein takes the opportunity offered by a British punitive expedition against the tribes of Buner, to examine the remains of that region. He mentions, while in the vicinity of Kingargalai, the numerous “Gumbats”, an “expression invariably used by the Pushtu-speaking population of the border for the description of stupas” (Stein 1898: 6). Forty years later, E. Barger and Ph. Wright explored the Swāt valley on behalf of the Archaeological Survey of India (Barger and Wright 1941: 1-37). Their report mentions another ‘Gumbat’ in the region of Bārikot. The latter has nothing to do with those encountered by A. Stein and is actually the find spot of the “Gumbat” pieces from the Victoria and Albert Museum collection (Ackermann 1975: 47-48, 52-53, 63-65, 83-85 and 166).

Kāfir Koh

The “Koh” or “hills” are numerous in Gandhāra, and it is quite difficult to place on a map, archaeological sites whose name contains this term. W. Zwalf has dealt with the problem of Kāfir Koh, “the black hill”, which supposedly yielded about seventy seventy pieces, now in the British Museum (Zwalf 1996: 27). These sculptures were donated to the museum in 1899 by Captain H.A. Deane who, as stated in his correspondence, discovered the site. A village named Kāfir Koh does exist north of Nal not far from Thāna in Swāt valley and the museum’s register does report that Captain H.A. Deane excavated a Buddhist site in that region. Yet, no Buddhist remains are visible at this Kāfir Koh and one might have to look for the find spot of the museum’s pieces on another black hill, such as the one located north of Chakdara.

Chārsada

Chārsada refers to a modern city, district and administrative sub-division (*tehsil*). In 1863, A. Cunningham identifies several mounds around Chārsada and associates the modern city with the ancient city of Puṣkalāvati (Cunningham 1864: 89). In 1882, 1902, 1958, 1962-1964 and 1992-1993, archaeological excavations conducted by various teams on these mounds revealed Buddhist sculptures. These mounds are those of Bālā Hisār (Marshall and Vogel 1903: 141-184), Mir Zyarat (Marshall and Vogel 1903: 141-184), Palatu Dherī (Marshall and Vogel 1903: 141-184), Shaikhan Dherī (Dani 1965: 17-208), Kula Dherī, Dur Marjan (Ali 1994: 24 and 47-48) and Banglae Dherī (Ali 1994: 24 and 45). While H.C. Ackermann specifies that some of the pieces from the Victoria and Albert Museum come from “Chārsada district” (Ackermann 1975: 57-58 pl. VIIb, 76-77 pl. XVII, 85 pl. XXIVa”), several publications or catalogues of collections are less methodical and assign many pieces to “Chārsada” or the “Chārsada mound” (Ingholt 1957: n° 285, 376, 390 and 462; Bhattacharyya 2002: 144 n° 353-358 and 137 n° 613; Kurita 2003: 914). This terminology is imprecise and wrong as it ignores a distinct archaeological reality. Subsequently, any piece which is not attributed to only of the mounds previously mentioned can only be assigned to “around Chārsada”.

Taxila

The case of Taxila offers a comparatively similar problem. “Taxila” designates an ancient city located at the head of the Sind Sāgar *doab* between the rivers Indus and Jhelum and comprises several distinct archaeological sites. These have been extensively explored by J. Marshall from 1912 and by A. D. Khan Said Siddiqi from 1934 onwards. The excavations conducted at each of the sites were recorded in a detailed report compiled in J. Marshall’s publication of 1951. Buddhist remains were uncovered from the city of Sirkap (Marshall 1951: 112-221), from the Buddhist establishments of Dharmarājikā (Marshall 1951:230-295), Kālāwān (Marshall 1951: 322-341), Moh ā Morādu (Marshall 1951: 358-364), Jauliān (Marshall 1951: 368-387), Pippala (Marshall 1951: 365-367), Giri (Marshall 1951: 342-347), Bamāla (Marshall 1951: 348-354) and Kunāla (Marshall 1951:391-397). Therefore, the name “Taxila” covers several Buddhist sites separated from one another by several kilometers. Consequently, the mention of “Taxila” which qualifies some sculptures only indicates that they were discovered within this archaeological complex.)

Hadda

The problem related to Hadda is similar to that of Taxila. The site is composed of approximately thirty Buddhist establishments, a dozen of which were explored by Ch. Masson at the end of the XIXth century (Masson 1841: 118) and systematically excavated by the DAFA in the 1930s and the 1970s (Barthoux 1930-1933, 2 volumes ; Tarzi 1976: 382-411). These monasteries and stūpas are those of: Tapa Kalan (Barthoux 1933: 69-

116), Prates (Bartoux 1933: 186-195), Tapa-i-Kafariha (Bartoux 1933: 117-142), Gar-Nao (Bartoux 1933: 196-204), Bagh-Gai (Bartoux 1933: 268), Deh-Goundi (Bartoux 1933: 205-208), Chakhil-i-Goundi (Bartoux 1933: 173-185) and Tepe Shotor (Mostamindi 1969a: 119-128; Tarzi 1976: 381-411). Many collections exhibit pieces said to be from Hadda (Pal 1986, 1: 218-219 n° S92 and 9; Kurita 2003, 2: n° 326). The fact that the concerned piece is of stucco, the latter medium being very popular around Hadda, does not guarantee this origin. It is well known that the excavations conducted at Jauliāñ (Marshall 1951: 368-387), Takht-i-Bahi (Hargreaves 1912: 33-39) and Shāh-jī-kī-Dherī (Spooner 1908: 17-22; Kuwayama 1997: 53-57) have also yielded a great quantity of stucco images. Moreover, the Buddhist sculptures securely attributed to one of the Buddhist establishments on the hill of Hadda are well identified by literature. These were discovered by the Scottish painter William Simpson (Simpson 1879-1890: 54; Simpson 1894: 93-112 ; Zwalf 1996: 276 n° 414) or excavated by Ch. Masson and seem to have been sent to the Victoria and Albert Museum and transferred to the British Museum (Zwalf 1996: 323-325 n° 573-575, 577-580). Both museums own several stucco heads said to be from Hadda and which were donated to the museums at the end of the XIXth century by British officers on duty in the region. Their exact origin is unknown and the context of their entry in the collection is unfortunately unrecorded. Nevertheless, the sculptures discovered by the DAFA team form a second group of documented pieces. These have been distributed among the Guimet Museum (Barthoux 1930-1933, 2 volumes) and the Kabul Museum (Tissot 2006: 359-458). Several sculptures were subsequently offered to the British Museum by J. Hackin on behalf of the Council of French Museums (Zwalf 1996: 316, 321-323, 334, 339 n° 542-543, 563-572, 616- 618, 631 and 635).

Sikri

The site of Sikri is famous for the quantity and wealth of its Buddhist sculptures. However, as noted by S. R. Dar in a study dedicated to the site, “no one knows today where the site of Sikri lies precisely (Dar 1999-2000: 19-43). This report of the little information we have about the site draws freely on the latter. Captain H.A. Deane, who was notified of the Buddhist remains of Sikri by farmers, places the site beyond Jamāl Garhī and Sāwaldher in Mardan district (Deane 1888: Dar 1999-2000: 19-20). A. Foucher, who examines the reliefs transported to the Lahore Museum, locates it at Shikar Tangai (Shakar Tangai), the valley of Hunt, 5 km east/north-east of Jamāl Garhī and 3 km north-east of Sāwaldher (Foucher 1903: 185). Nevertheless, the map which illustrates his *Géographie Ancienne du Gandhāra* (1902) puts it just north of Sāwaldher. As for N.V. Aiyar, author of the 1915-1916’s “List of Ancient Monuments in the Frontier Circle” (*Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*), Sikri, or Shakar Tangai, is situated approximately two miles north-east of Sāwaldher, beyond the Upper Swāt Canal, in a little valley called Zangali Tangai (Aiyar 1915-1916: 36). Finally, S.R. Dar, who stipulates that no Buddhist ruin was ever found at these places, suggests that Sikri could linger hidden in one of

Remarks on the Geographical definition of the Gandhāran Buddhist Sites

the many folds of the Paja Mounds known today as Shikarai Tangai (Dar 1999-2000: 19). Thus, although the various hypothetical locations of Sikri lie within a limited perimeter, the truth remains unknown.

The definition of some sites is sometimes uncertain but their attribution to a larger geographical unit, i.e. a region, can be just as hazardous. The nature of documentation adopted by the Archaeological Survey of India and the formation of administrative divisions when Pakistan was founded in 1947 blur our understanding of Gandhāra's archaeological map. This problem is well illustrated by two examples. The first is related to the expression "country of the Yusufzai". This country was explored by Dr. Bellew in 1864 and by A. Cunningham between 1872 and 1873 and the account of A. Cunningham's survey is published in the fifth volume of the Archaeological Survey of India's reports under the title "Yusufzai" (Cunningham 1875: 1-8). According to A. Cunningham's definition, this country of the Afghan Yusufzais comprises the northern independent districts of Swāt and Buner and by a southern zone controlled by the British and spreading between the Swāt, Kabul and Indus Rivers. Suffice to say that the "country of the Yusufzais" or "Yusufzai" encompasses most of the geographical field of Gandhāran studies. The reference to "Yusufzai" which labels the sculptures of the India Office photographs is really of little help. Unfortunately, it is nevertheless this attribution which describes many of the pieces from the British Museum and the India Museum, Kolkata. Let us now pass on to the second example: the site of Nawāgai. This site was excavated by E. Barger and Ph. Wright before the independence of Pakistan and was described as part of the Swāt valley in their survey report (Barger and Wright 1941: 1-37). Yet, in the 1995 report of the Department of Archaeology of the University of Peshāwar, Nawāgai appears in the Bajaur section (ur-Rehman et al. 1996: 121-175). This is rather ambiguous as both Swāt and Bajaur relate to geographical zones and administrative divisions whose limits fluctuated over time. The contradictions one may face when attributing a site to a broader geographical unit are numerous and we would rather seek for a solution than to mention them all; indeed, this attribution is essential.

Our stylistic analysis aims at characterising the artistic production of each site. However, this study can only be conceived in terms of comparisons and inevitably implies the issue of interaction. A style can be endemic to one site or, on the contrary, diffused. How then can this diffusion zone be defined? We think that it is possible to foresee the contours, often blurry, of this diffusion zone according to the physical geography of Gandhāra. We have therefore attributed each site to one region, sometimes a sub-region, on the basis of its geo-physical bearings. One may question the pertinence of this attribution, nevertheless, a scientific analysis is essential and must follow a logical order and this seemingly least subjective structure should be the starting point. An artistic motif is more likely to cross the Kabul River than to stop at the border of Chārsada district.

To conclude, we wish to stress upon the necessity to question the validity of the

terminologies pertaining to the Gandhāran sites. Imprecise expressions are partly responsible for the archaeological intractability of the remains as they distort archaeological realities. The archaeological context of Buddhist sculptures, the historical circumstances in which they were found and subsequently transferred to public and private collections are consequently blurred and crucial data to a stylistic study of Gandhāran art, lost. This unfortunate state of affairs should be the prime warning to scholars of Gandhāran art.

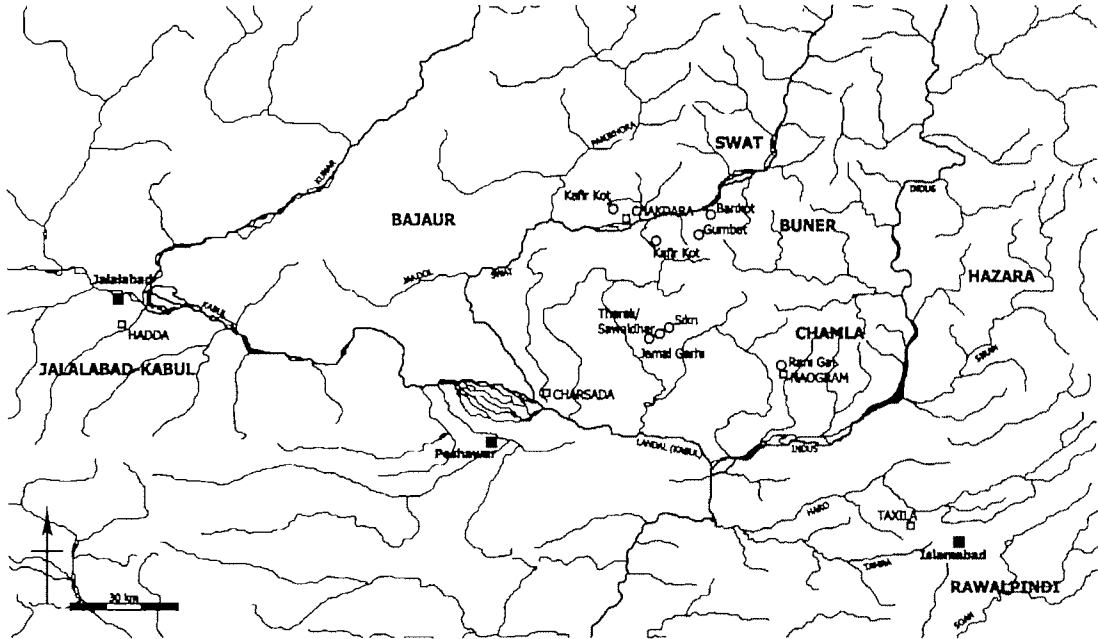
A proposition of sites' geographical distribution follows this article. It only accounts for sites where elements of Buddhist sculptures or narrative reliefs have been found. This proposition has been conceived as an indicative and perfectible tool for our stylistic analysis and for the scholars of Gandhāran art. It is our hope to publish the first results of this systematic review of Gandhāran schools of art in the near future.

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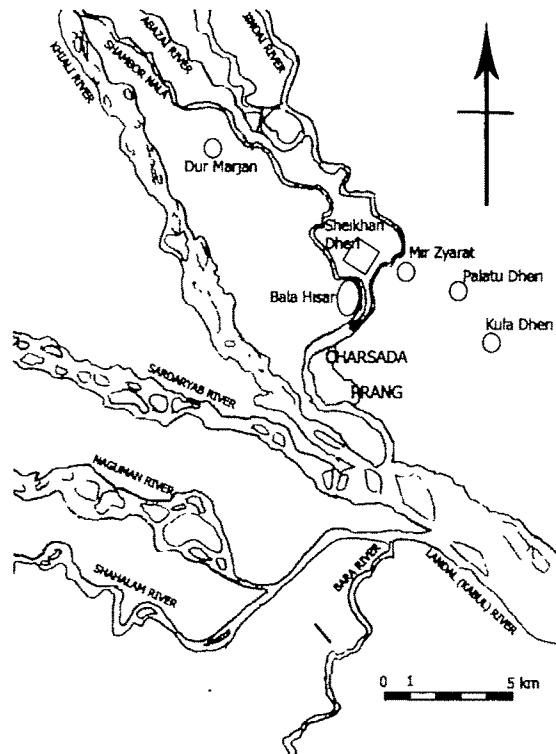
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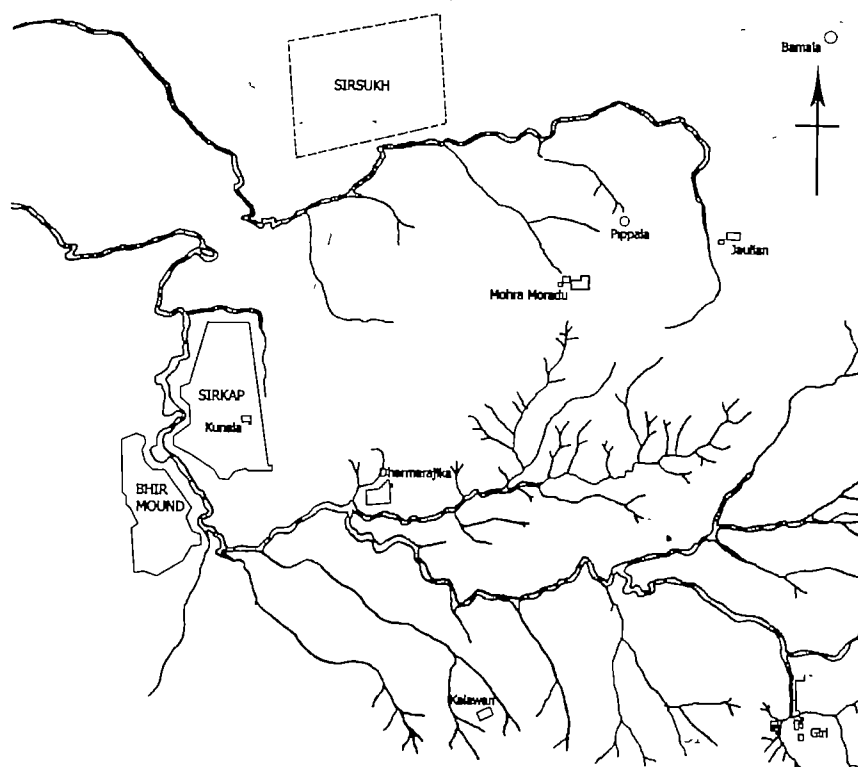


1. Map of Gandhāra

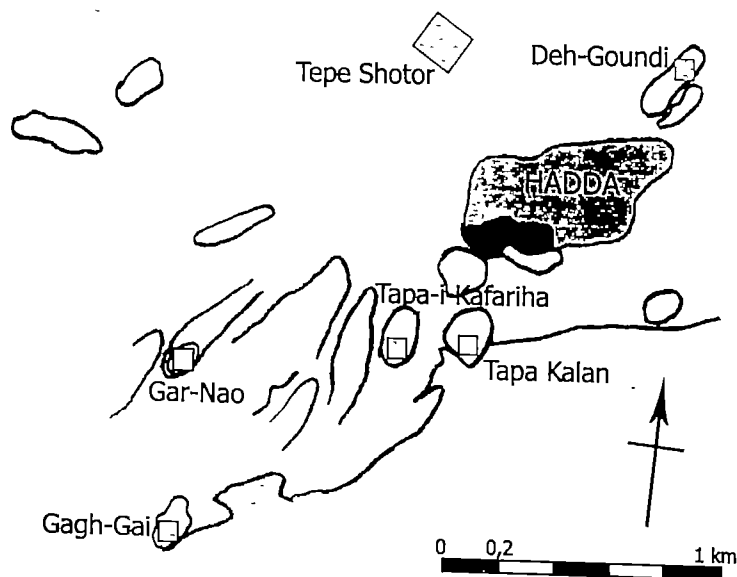


2. Map of Charsada area

Remarks on the Geographical definition of the Gandhāran Buddhist Sites



3. Map of Taxila area



4. Map of Hadda area

Geographical Distribution of Gandharan Buddhist Sites

A. Peshawar-Mardan Basin

A.1. Sardariab/Abazai-Khiali Rivers confluent

- Bālā Hisār
- Mir Zyarat
- Sheikhan Dherī
- Banglae Dherī
- Kula Dherī
- Palatu Dherī
- Dur Marjan

A.2. Left Bank of Bara River

- Shāh-jī-kī-Dherī
- Muhammad Zai
- Tahkāl Pāyān

A.3. Left Bank of Khiali River

- Skarah Dherī

A.4. Kalpani Valley

- Takht-i-Bāhī
- Sahrī-Bāhlol

A.5. Paja Mounds

- Jamāl Garhī
- Sikri
- Thareli

A.6. Karamar Range

- Mekha Sanda
- Chanaka Dherī
- Shāhbdāgarhi

A.7. Confluent of Kabul/Kalpani Rivers (Nowshera)

- No precise site identified

A.8. Upper Abazai Valley

- Abazai

A.9. South of Ambela Pass/North of Badrai River Source

- Rustam
- Kotera
- Rāni Ghat
- Dara Adam Khil
- Khrakhpa
- Kotkai
- Naranji
- Shingru
- Takhta Band
- Amānkot

Remarks on the Geographical definition of the Gandhāran Buddhist Sites

B. Khyber Pass

- Jamrud
- Shpola Stapa
- Ali Masjid

C. Northern Passes Region

C.1. Malakand Pass

- Dargai
- Kaldarga

C.2. Sharkotlai/Shāhkot Passes

- Shāhkot Pass
- Kharkai

C.3. Shāhkot/Karakar Passes–Palāi Valley

- Loriyan Tangai
- Palāi
- Koi/Koī Tangi
- Mian Khan
- Mala Tangi
- Nathu
- Shangao/Nullah
- Chinglai
- Jao
- Parkhan
- Aslame Pate
- Rānikot
- Rega

D. Swāt Valley

D.1. Middle Swāt Valley–Left Bank/Mingora Region

- Butkara I
- Butkara III
- Saidu Sharif
- Panr
- Charg Pate
- Shnaisha
- Katelai
- Baligram

D.2. Middle Swāt Valley–Left Bank/Bārikot Region

- Bārikot/Bīr-kot-ghwandai
- Kanjar Kote
- Gumbat
- Chinabara
- Abarchinar

D.3. Middle Swat Valley - Right Bank/Barikot Region

- Nīmogrām
- Gumbatūna
- Marjanai
- Amlūk
- Dadahara
- Kafir Kot

D.4. North of Malakand/Shāhkot Passes

- Andan Dherī
- Chatpat

- Damkot
- Rāmora
- Allāndand

D.5. Upper Swāt Valley

- Tutkē
- Leobanr

E. Bajaur/Ambar Pass

- Nawāgaī
- Roshai Dheri (Salarzai)

F. Penjab

F.1. Chach Plain

- Attock
- Haji-shah morr
- Garhi matani

F.2. Tamra Valley

- Taxila
- Dharmarājikā
- Kunāla
- Jauliāñ
- Bamāla

F.3. Soan Valley

- Manikyāla

G. Jelalabad

- Hadda
- Tapa-i-Kafariha
- Bagh-Gai
- Tepe Shotor

H. Kabul Region

- Guldara
- Chahār Bāgh 2

I. Kapisa

- Kham Zargar

- Bambolai
- Chakdara

- Tirāt

- Kotkai (Salarzai)

- Akhūn Dherī
- Kamra

- Sirkap
- Kālawān
- Mohrā Morādu
- Pippala
- Jinan Wali Dheri

- Rokri

- Tapa Kalan
- Gar Nao
- Chakhil-i-Goundi
- Ahin Posh

- Passani VII
- Magarmast

- Shotorak

Remarks on the Geographical definition of the Gandhāran Buddhist Sites

- Qol-i-Nader

- Paītava

- Nejrab

J. Siran River

- Tarbela

- Garh Mauryan

- Zar Dhe4

- Karratcha

- Tepe Maranjan

- Tchghasaray

- Ghazi/Gala

- Sarai Saleh

Buddhism in Gandhara : A Relook at Material Remains

SARITA KHETTRY

Gandhāra was the ancient name of a region which included Pushakalāvati (Charsada in the Peshawar district) and sometimes also Takshaṣilā (Shah-ḍheri=Taxila in the Rawalpindi district). The country was thus situated on both sides on the Sindhu or the Indus and included parts of the Peshawar and Rawalpindi districts (Rāmāyaṇa 113.11, 114.11; Vāyu Purāṇa LXXXVIII:189-90; Strabo XV, 26; Ptolemy 1898:VII,I,42). The term in its broader sense, comprised besides, Gandhāra proper, several neighbouring regions, particularly the Swat and other river valleys to the north, the region around the city of Taxila to the east, and the Eastern Afghanistan (culturally it was a part of Indian Subcontinent). Gandhāra was an important centre of Buddhism since its introduction during the reign of Mauryan king Aśoka till about the middle of the 7th century. This is attested by epigraphic and literary sources (Basak 1959:71-2; Bhandarkar 1969: 78; Cowell and Neil 1886:433-34; Geiger 1912: 82-4). Apart from inscriptions; material remains often provide important insights into history of development of Buddhist sects and lay practice, regarding which the texts are silent. The recent discoveries of inscribed water pots and birch bark manuscripts from Eastern Afghanistan, which are now in the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British library, London, Senior Collection and the Private Collections have added significantly to our knowledge of Buddhism of the region concerned (Salomon 1997, 1999).

During the time of Aśoka various sects of Hīnayāna or Nikāya Buddhism came into existence with their tenets and literatures. In this connection, we can refer to five Schools, viz., Mahāsaṃghika, Sarvāstivāda, Bahuśrutīya, Kāśyapīya and Dharmaguptaka in the north-western part of the Indian Subcontinent. Of these sects, the Mahāsaṃghika and the Sarvāstivāda were the most important sects till the Kushāṇa period. The epigraphical as well as the accounts left by foreign travellers like Fa-hsien, XuanZang and I-tsing testified to the above fact. The Dharmaguptakas figure prominently in the history of sectarian development of 'Hīnayāna' or 'Nikāya' Buddhism. The importance of this school lies in the fact that they were the first Buddhist school to establish themselves in Central Asia and China and it was by their effort that Buddhism was introduced in these countries. Although the history of the Dharmaguptaka School in India (the term India is used in a wider sense, denoting the Indian Subcontinent as a whole, including the borderlands of the northwest) in general and Gandhāra in particular has been obscure. At the same time several scholars believed that the Dharmaguptakas played an unobtrusive role in the Indian Subcontinent Buddhist inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī make no mention of

em (Bureau 1955; Lamotte 1988 : 527). However, this paper aims at revising the history above mentioned sect in the light of new discoveries.

The formation of this School is variously presented in the accounts of Buddhist sects. According to one tradition, the Dharmaguptaka is one of the sub sects derived from the Sarvāstivādins while in Pāli Theravāda tradition, it is identified as an out growth of the Mahāsāśaka sect (Lamotte 1988 : 529-32). The founder of this School was one Dharmaguptaka who declares himself that he was the successor of Maudgalyāyana (Masuda 25). This School originated in the Aparānta country. During the time of Fa-hsien (beginning of the 4th Century A.D.), the Hīnayānist had 500 Saṅghārāmas in Uḍḍiyāna (Kashgar Valley). They were supplanted by the Mahāyānist in this region during the next two centuries. In approximately 630, XuanZang in his *His-yò-chi* (Beal 1981 : 120-21) notes their disappearance: 'on both banks of the Śubhavastu river, there were formerly 1,400 Saṅghārāmas, most of which are already deserted. In the past, the monks in that land numbered 18,000: now they have gradually diminished. They all study the Māhāyāna and are engaged in the practice of meditation on quietude. They are skillful at reciting the texts, but do not seek to understand their profound meaning. Their disciplinary conduct is pure, and they are especially versed in magical formulae. The Vinaya tradition of the five Schools, namely, the Sarvāstivādins, the Mahāsāśakas, the Kāśyapīyas and the Mahāsaṅghikas were known to them. This is the only allusion to that School in the *His-yò-chi*. Half a century later, when I-tsing arrived in about 671, he found few adherents of the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāśaka and Kāśyapīya School in Udyāna. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. they effectively established themselves in Central Asia and China. This is proved by the fact that, according to Bernard (Bernard 1970 : 59), one of the Central Asian Kharoṣṭī documents from Niya (no. 510) contains six verses which correspond to the concluding verses of the Prātimokśhasūtra in the Dharmaguptaka version, implying that its writer belonged to this sect. This led Richard Salomon (Salomon 1999 : 167-68) to believe that Dharmaguptaka monks were present in the Buddhist communities of the Kharoṣṭī Kingdom in and around the 3rd Century A.D., and since there is no direct evidence there for the presence of any other particular sect at this relatively early period, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the Dharmaguptakas were the dominant School there. We cannot also deny the role played by this School in the diffusion of the Vinaya in China. This is well attested by E.H. Lamotte who comments :

In the list of the five Schools drawn up in China, it was the Dharmaguptakas who most frequently occupied the place of honour. There is nothing surprising in this considering the role played by that school in the diffusion of Vinaya in China. The first formularies (karmavācānā)....pertained to that school. According to I-tsing, China followed mainly the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya and....the Pātimokśha of that school was considered to be the paramount code of Hīnayānist Buddhism until the final years of the Empire (Lamotte 1988 : 538).

The activity of this School in the Indian Subcontinent since its origin in the 2nd Century B.C. till its advent in the Central Asia and China is not much known. However, the early dissemination of Dharmaguptakas in the 3rd Century A.D. in Central Asia definitely indicates its affiliation with Gandhāra region. A large number of pots and fragments of pots made of clay, or occasionally of ceramic and metal have been found at Buddhist monasteries of Gandhāra and adjoining regions of modern Pakistan and Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and ancient Bactria. These pots were used for the carrying and storage of water and for domestic storage of a wide range of commodities. These water-pots (pāniya-ghaḍḍa or kuṇḍika) were embedded in the floor near the sacred monuments (Callieri 1997). From I-tsing's account we come to know that pottery, along with porcelain, was one of the two materials used for keeping clean water, whereas 'touched water' (i.e. dirty water) was kept in copper or iron vessels. According to G. Verardi (Verardi 1994) water was certainly involved in lustration rituals carried out in the sacred area, but the specific presence of these water-pots near the sacred monuments could be connected with the offerings made by devotees. This is clear from a good number of pots (both complete and fragmentary) which are inscribed with Kharoshthī and Brāhmī scripts. They are donative in nature and found at the Buddhist monasteries at Takht-i-Bahi, Pālāṭu-dheri, Sahri-Bahlol, Tor-Dherai (mentioned by S. Konow), Peshawar, Qunduz, Kara Tepe and Faiz Tepe near Termez, Uzbekistan, Bāswal, Butkara, TepeZargarān, GulDara, Saidu Sharif Mekhāsāṇḍa, Rānighāt, Shaikhān Dherī and at Haḍḍa (new finds) (Konow 1929 : 63; Salomon 1999 : 188). The dedicatory inscriptions on the pots, like other types of Buddhist donative records contain the description of the record, name of the donor and specification of the recipient of the gift, the geographical location of the recipients, the purpose for which the donation is made and the religious merit acquired from it. Unlike the other Buddhist donative records dates are not mentioned. The discovery of large number of such records from Gandhāra and its adjoining regions suggests that it was a common and widespread form of donation on the part of laymen, pilgrims and worshippers to Buddhist monasteries. The interesting point is that sometimes the inscribed water-pots and their fragmentary parts contain the name of the Buddhist sect to which the monastery belonged. This would help in unraveling the many facts of history of religious sect. So these are not mere minor gifts or casual finds but an important archaeological source of history. We can refer to here five water-pots which are in the collection of British Library, London. A detailed survey of these water-pots is made by R. Salomon in his book entitled 'Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra.' (Salomon 1999 : 183-224). F.R. Allchin's analysis of the pots reveals the following details: Four water-pots were complete and one had lost its neck and rim. They were wheel thrown and were made out of finely sorted clay. They had a smoothened or lightly burnished surface and a light cream/buff wash or slip. The pots were globular or near-globular in shape, basically the kind of vessels used for storing water or other household commodities. Three of them were decorated with stamped impressions of rosettes.

The writing in black ink was added onto the shoulder of the pot after firing. It is derived from probably a local source. Of these five water-pots, pot D (as mentioned by R. Salomon) is dedicated to the Buddhist sect of the Dharmaguptakas. (Saghami caḍḍisami dhamaḍḍeaṇa parigrahami 'Given to the Universal Community, in the possession of the Dharmaguptakas'). Several other fragmentary parts of the water-pots (no. 8, 11, 17) refer to the Dharmaguptakas. Significantly, the pot D which is donated to the Dharmaguptaka sect contains Buddhist manuscripts which are written on birch-bark in Gāndhārī language and Kharoshṭī script. This shows that the manuscripts must have come from or at least have been associated in some way with, a monastery of Dharmaguptaka sect. According to R. Salomon the probable provenance of British library pots was the ancient Nagarahāra (the modern Jalalabad plain) in Eastern Afghanistan. His contention is based on the fact that abundant Buddhist stūpa sites in the Jalalabad plain (the ancient Nagarahāra) and particularly those in the neighbourhood of the village of Haḍḍa yielded many specimens of inscribed pots that have a close similarity with British library pots. A close resemblance with Shaikhan Dheri pots suggests early first Centuries of the Christian era for the date of British Library pots. On the basis of paleographic and linguistic ground the birch-bark Buddhist manuscripts can be dated to period ranging from early first century A.D. to the middle of the second century A.D. However, the reference to two important Indo-Scythian rulers namely Jihonika and Aśpavannan (who ruled in the north-western part of the Indian Subcontinent in the early first century A.D.) in the Buddhist fragments prove that the cultural tradition of the texts stems from the Indo-Scythian period of the early first century A.D. Thus, if we believe in the argument of R. Salomon regarding the provenance and date of both inscribed pots and Buddhist manuscripts then we can say that by about early first century A.D. or during Indo-Scythian period Nagarahāra in Eastern Afghanistan was a principal centre of Dharmaguptakas. In this connection mention should be made to other newly discovered ceramic pot now in the private collection. The pot belongs to variety of globular or nearly globular jars used for storage of water or domestic commodities. It is nearly 40 cm high with its neck broken. The pot is reported to have found in the region around Jalalabad in Eastern Afghanistan. Below the neck of the pot one line Kharoshṭī inscription is found which gives the following reading (Strauch 2007) :

Saghe cadodi<śa>mi radaṇa acarya dharmaudaka p(ra)digha[he][eva ca][dha]rma//

.....'For the Buddhist order of the four directions, in the possession (of) the Dharmaguptaka teachers (at) Radaṇa and so....of the Dharma(?)//'

It appears from the above inscription that ceramic pot is a gift to the Dharmaguptaka teachers at Radaṇa. The name Radaṇa is definitely a place name where Dharmaguptaka teachers use to reside. The term Radaṇa also occurs on an inscribed jar from Schoyen collection (Strauch 2007) which is said to be given to dharmamuya (na) teachers of that place : Saghe catur[ti]śami[ra]danami acaryana dharmamuyana pratigrahe

‘[Gift] to the Universal community, in the possession of the dharmamuyana (Dharmaguptaka) teachers at Radana(?).’

Ingo Strauch pointed out that, ‘not only there is similarity between both the texts but the shapes of both the pots and their decoration suggests that both objects originated from same place Radana.’ However, the exact identification of this place is not known. With regard to its general location Radana has to be looked for some where in the area near modern Jalalabad on the basis of close resemblance with inscribed Hadda pot published by G. Fussman (Fussman 1969). Other than these a number of pot and potsherds have been found from Eastern Afghanistan which are now in the private collection and dedicated to the Dharmaguptaka teachers at Sreṭharaṇa (Saghe cadudiṣe S(re)ṭharaṇe acarayana dharmadatakana para[sic] grahami (Salomon 1999 : 169). Sadakata has also mentioned a pair of sherds which has an inscription cadudiṣami Sreṭhara [ṇami] madataka (Sadakata 1996). It appears that both the potsherds derived from a single source.

The presence of Dharmaguptakas in the north-western part of the Indian Subcontinent in the first centuries A.D. is attested by Jamalgarhi stone inscription. According to Lōders this School had their other important centre in the Mathurā region in northern India during the Kushana period. He refers to a Brāhmī inscription (Lōders 1961:187, no 150) on the pedestal of a Boddhisattva image which probably comes from Mathurā or its environs. The inscription records the donation of image to the Dharmaguptaka teachers (acāryana dharmaguptakāna pratigrahe). Another Brāhmī pedestal inscription hails from Girdharpur in Mathurā region, recording a dedication to the Dharmaguptakas in the year 29 of Mahārāja Huvishka (Rosenfield 1967 : 229-30). Bactria which was situated in Northern Afghanistan and one of the main seat of activity of the Kushanas is considered to be one of the strong holds of the Dharmaguptaka sects. The so-called Qunduz Vase inscription which is reported to have come from somewhere in northern Afghanistan, i.e. in Ancient Bactria, records that it was presented to the Dharmaguptaka teachers (acariyanam dhammaguptakana parigrahe) (Fussman 1974).

Gāndhārī (North-Western Prakrit) was the major language of Gandhāra. It has been in use even before the introduction of Buddhism in the region concerned. It is said that the Buddha advised his disciples to impart his teachings in the local language of the region. Following this principle, the Buddhists who settled in Gandhāra adopted Gāndhārī as the medium of propagation of their religion. The Dharmaguptakas who were affiliated to Gandhāra used Gāndhārī as their medium of instruction and writing their texts. It has been suggested that the Chinese translation of Dīrghāgama which is evidently a Dharmaguptaka text was translated from Gāndhārī prototype rather than from an original in some other Prakrit dialect or in Sanskrit (Lamotte 1988 : 569-70). The Central Asian Kharoṣṭī document from Niya is also written in Gāndhārī language. The British library manuscript which belonged to Dharmaguptaka School is written in Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭī

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script. As we know, Arapacana syllabary which had its origin in Gandhāra region appears in the Chinese translation of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya. It was perhaps the Dharmaguptakas who first made use of Arapacana in North-West to teach the dhāraṇī or 'protective hymns' in order to facilitate the good law (Lamotte 1988 : 497).

From remote antiquity Gandhara had connections with the outside world through several overland and sea routes. References to these routes are found in Indian and foreign sources of the pre-Christian century and early centuries of the Christian era. Overland routes played an important part in establishing cultural relations with Central Asia and China. The main route proceeded along the valley of the Kabul river and reached the Hindu-Kush mountains through Purushapura (Peshawar), Nagarahāra (Jalalabad) and other cities. To the north-west of the Hindu-Kush was Bactriana with its capital at Bactra (Balkh). The route on the other side of the Oxus ran through different localities in Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Kirghizia and ultimately reached Kashgarh. At the latter site reached the routes running from the Dun-Huang area in China along the north and southern limits of the Takla Makan desert (in Xinjiang). From here one could go to So-Chu (Yarkand) and then the Ts'ung-ling (the Pamirs) (Mukherjee 1996 : 3). The Chinese treatise Hou-Han-Shu refers to a route running from Shan-Shan (to the south of Lop-nor in Xinjiang) to the Ta-Yüeh-Chi country (the Kushana empire which incorporated the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent including Kāśmīra situated not far from the Pamir area). It appears from the Wei-lüeh that following this route one could reach Ki-pin (an administrative division of North-Western India including Kāśmīra) and Ta-hsia (Eastern Bactria) and Tien-chu (the lower Indus country) (Mukherjee 1988 : 363-64). A very important, but difficult, route from Central Asia to Ki-pin in North-Western India (including Kāśmīra) ran through Kashgarh, Yarkand, and the Pamirs (Mukherjee 1996 : 5). The last noted route continues to through the areas of Hunza to Gilgit. From here the route passed through Chilas, Dasu, Mansehra and Abbottabad and ultimately reached Taxila (in the Rawalpindi district) (Mukherjee 1996 : 5-6; Dani 1983 : 1). There was another route from Gilgit to the Kashmir Valley. Thus there were Channels of communication connecting Gandhara and its adjoining regions with Central Asia and China on one hand and West Asia on the other. Through these routes travelled emigrants, including missionaries and traders. Buddhism, which was the prime force of the cultural life of the majority of North-Western India, disseminated to Central Asia and from there to China through one of the overland routes by the efforts of Dharmaguptakas.

Thus, material remains bring to light a forgotten but crucial phase in the history of development of sectarian Buddhism in Gandhāra where Dharmaguptakas played an important role under the patronage of Indo-Scythian kingdoms in the early Christian centuries. The gift of water pot and their fragments therefore provide the missing link, or at least one of the missing links, between Gandhāran Buddhism and its early manifestations

in Central Asia and China. The decline of Dharmaguptakas in the Gandhāra and its adjoining regions could be explained as a result of shifting patronage as their Indo-Scythian supporters were replaced by Kushanas who were followers of Sarvastivādin sect.

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List of Illustrations

Map. 1. Gandhāra. Courtesy : Salomon. Source : Ancient Buddhist Scrolls From Gandhāra
: The British Library Kharoshthi Fragments

Plate 1 Pot A in British Library Collection. Courtesy: Salomon.

Plate 2 Pot B in British Library Collection. Courtesy: Salomon.

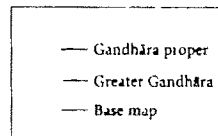
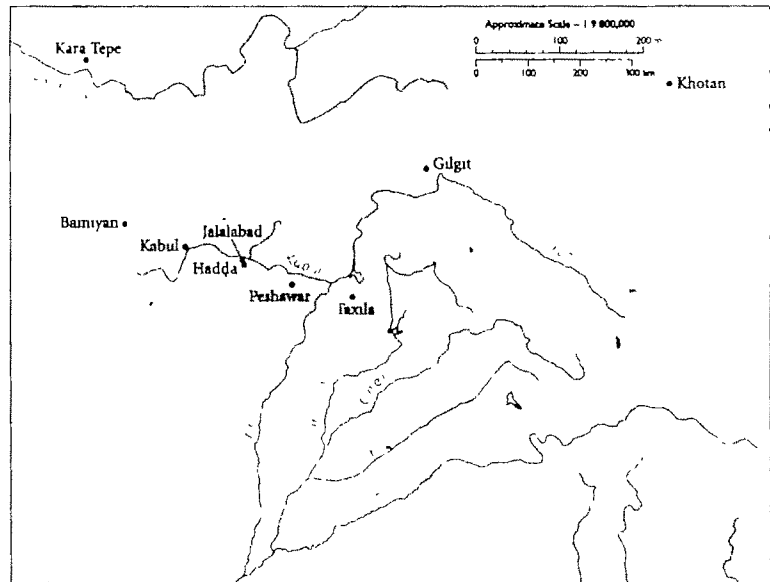
Plate 3 Pot C in British Library Collection. Courtesy: Salomon.

Plate 4 Pot D in British Library Collection. Courtesy: Salomon.

Plate 5 Pot E in British Library Collection. Courtesy: Salomon.

Plate 6 Close view of Pot D in British Library Collection. Courtesy: Salomon.

Plate 7 General view of a pot found from Eastern Afghanistan referring to Dharmaguptakas (Dharmaudaka). Courtesy: Strauch. Source: Gandharan Studies, Vol. I.



Map-1

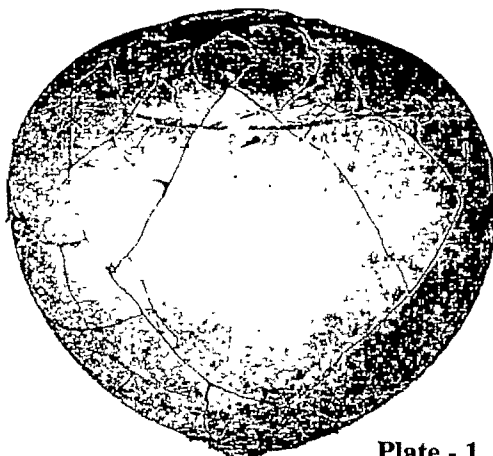


Plate - 1



Plate - 2

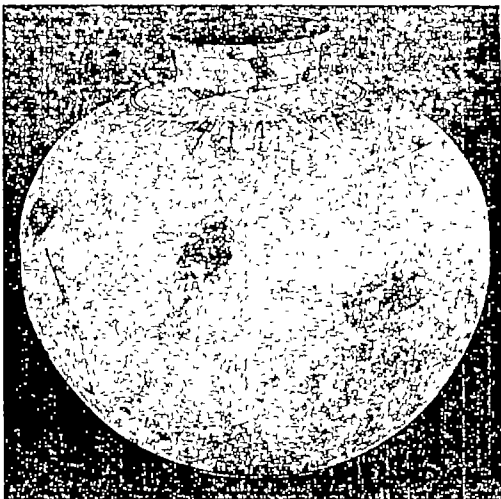


Plate - 3

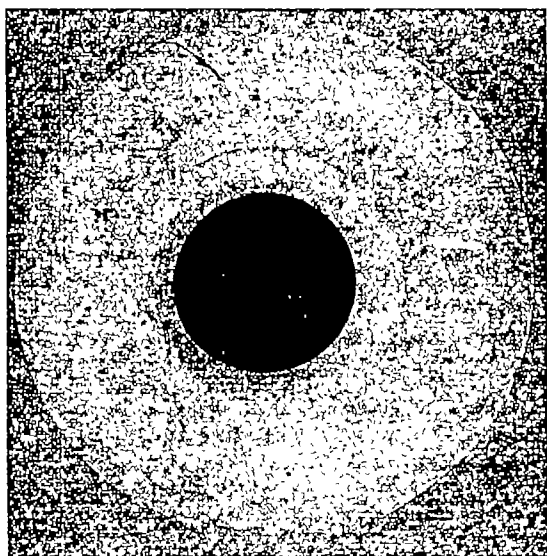


Plate - 4

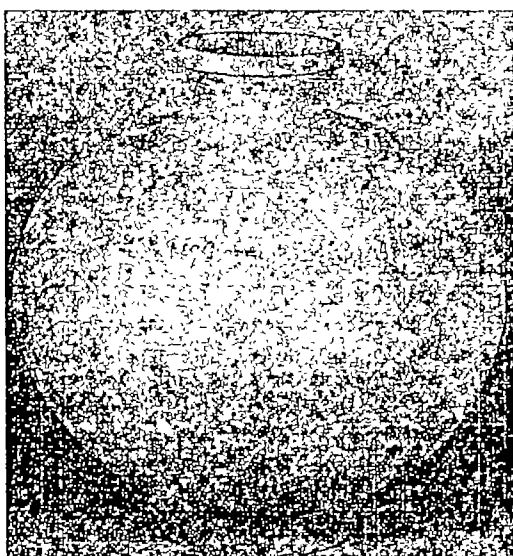


Plate - 5

Śakuntalā and Vasantasenā—Images of the Feminine

PREETA BHATTACHARYA AND RITA CHAUDHURI

Śakuntalā and Vasantasenā—the two characters in Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna Śakuntalam* and Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika*—represent two unique faces of the feminine in an urban milieu dominated by a material culture responding to the requirements of technologically based urban groups. This urban culture had a basically secular framework which found expression through literature, drama, art and other cultural manifestations. Obviously ecclesiasticalism was not required for rationalising its existence.

Urban centres during what is known controversially as the “Golden Age” in early Indian history produced a set of literature which was typically characteristic of its background. The creative works of Vātsyāyana, Bhāsa, Kālidāsa, Śūdraka and others essentially depict the ways of life led by the elite. Sanskrit literature of this type was highly sophisticated and was composed for a limited audience. They were written mainly for presentation at court or for comparatively small circles who had the leisure and aptitude to understand the rigid canons of literary convention and appreciate the verbal ingenuity. This prestigious leisure class was often appended to the ruling class. Hence generally literature tended to become a close preserve of the class in power—private literature not accessible to the common man, a proposition typical of all creative Sanskrit literature.

The story of Śakuntalā has come down to us in a wide range of literary forms. It survives in the epic *Mahābhārata* as an independent legend, it also survives in a folktale form neatly fitted into the ethical scheme of the *Jātaka* narratives. But it is mainly associated with the court drama of Kālidāsa, the *Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam*.¹ Each of the narratives focuses on a young woman, Śakuntalā and each time comes up with a different cultural representation. The narrative makes its way through a cluster of contesting versions and in the process makes and unmakes the traditional image of the woman in the context of Indian literature. On one hand, some Śakuntalā narratives reconstitute patriarchy and reconsolidate hegemonic ideologies, while on the other hand, yet another group of Śakuntalā stories subvert the traditional, stereotypical image of the high born, elite woman.

The process is further complicated by the fact that, the core motif of the Śakuntalā story is drawn from the realm of folktales. In folktales, the motif of a celestial woman cohabiting with a mortal man can be found in every corner of the world. The folktale or the wondertale has a life of its own. It is almost impossible to pin down such a story to its specific cultural context. Tales travel swiftly and easily across cultural barriers. In the process they are, of course, reshaped and remoulded. The framings of the stories often change, as also their functions in the societies they drift into. But certain peculiar motifs or elements can be replicated in widely divergent versions.

In the world of folktales, the motif of a supernatural woman living with a mortal man can be identified with a large group of swan maiden stories (Fass Leary 1994). It involves the depiction of a celestial woman, a fairy, captured by an ordinary mortal and forced into a tedious domestic existence. The variants of the story contrast the pleasures of a magic realm with the harder facts of life. The tales further depict the image of a deviant wife in her flight from her traditional role and is prone to be laden with themes of guilt, curses and retribution. In folktales, a reconciliation of the couple often takes place. Thus another important theme is fitted into the story—the winning and rewinning of the supernatural spouse. A superhuman effort becomes the prerequisite for the union, where the hero has to undergo arduous trials to prove himself. Thus the hero transcends the ordinary everyday existence and he himself is transported into a different plane of existence, an enchanted world, where he can recapture his truant wife.

Now it can be argued that, the core of the Śakuntalā story is actually derived from the swan maiden group of stories inflated with diverse sub-themes in the course of its journey through several centuries. The first mention of the story, just a passing reference, is made in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, where Śakuntalā is clearly described as an Apsarā and the mother of Bharata. Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta, performed the aśwamedha and consolidated the Bharata clan.²

The story is fleshed out in detail in the Ādi Parvan of the *Mahābhārata*³, where the origin myths of the Puru lineage are recounted. In early Indian discourses, the past is often constructed in a genealogical format. This propensity is articulated in the epics, where the Candravaūśa and the Sūryavaūśa are projected as watertight descent groups. Unbroken succession lists are put forward to legitimise dynastic rule.

It is curious that, often the reconsolidation of a Kṣatriya descent group is associated with the marriage of the king to some supernatural creature. It can be an Apsarā, a water-nymph or any other semi-divine being from the other world. The male child of this union revives dynastic rule on a grand scale. The importance of the Apsarā in the genealogical pattern is articulated in several stories of the *Mahābhārata*. Umpteen references come to mind—the stories of Urvaśī and Purūravas⁴, Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta, Gaṅgā and Śāntanu.⁵ Among these stories the story of Urvaśī and Purūravas is available in quite a wide range of versions. It follows a more traditional swan maiden pattern where the hero is made to achieve miraculous feats in order to regain Urvaśī, though it happens in a much later version.

The Śakuntalā story of the epic is woven in the narrative section of the *Mahābhārata* as a subplot. It retains its folktale structure though it has been refashioned as an ancestral legend. Here Śakuntalā is clearly an apsarā, associated with a different universe, often travelling back and forth between this world and the other. The cultural representations of the Apsarā always project an image of unfettered female sexuality, both alluring and intimidating. The image of Śakuntalā encapsulated the hyperfeminine Apsarā

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characteristics. But it is toned down by the spiritual powers of the ascetics symbolised by her father Viśwāmitra and the āśramic ambience where she grew up.

The images of the Apsarā often encapsulate the notion of something dangerous and mysterious. D.D. Kosambi argued that the danger of mating with an Apsarā had come up again and again in early Indian narratives (Kosambi 1983). He interprets this fear by a detailed analysis of mythological material involving mother goddess cults, apsarās and human sacrifice. Though some of Kosambi's conclusions are no longer accepted it can not be denied that mating with the Apsarā was considered something dangerous. It is hinted in most of the versions of the Purūravas story. Marriage with Gaṅgā brought only a brief moment of happiness to Śāntanu. In the story of Ruru and Pramadvarā in the *Mahābhārata*⁶, Pramadvarā, the daughter of Apsarā Menakā, died of snakebite. In folklore language death symbolically represents a flight from the husband. Ruru had to give up half of his natural life to be reunited with his lover. Even the innocent hermit girl Śakuntalā was fed by Śakuntas, birds of ill omen. In some of the stories the women leave their husbands for good. Gaṅgā and Menakā never come back. The Śakuntalā story however, follows a different trajectory.

The Apsarā motif in the epic can be interpreted as depicting exogamous marriages. Here a girl from another tribe has been trapped into an unsuitable union through the strength and low cunning of the man. This is also the core of the swan maiden stories, which are widespread and retained in most cultures. The woman is a symbolic outsider and marriage demanded being enmeshed in a world never quite her own.

In the epic, the meeting of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā symbolises the confrontation of the two cultures. The aggressive pictures of the hunt bring forth the two contesting cultures of aranya and janapada.⁷ This tension is encapsulated within the Duṣyanta-Śakuntalā relationship. Here the other world is symbolised by the āśrama. Śakuntalā though married to Duṣyanta actually dwells in her own world—a subversion of the patrilocal custom. Only when a male child is born she travels to Hastināpur and demands that her son be recognised as the legitimate heir. The conflict is resolved through divine intervention as the paternity of the child is established. The male child empowers the mother and she gains a foothold in the royal household. With chiefdoms turning into nascent kingdoms, continuation of the lineage had to be theoretically buttressed by origin myths and legendary material. The offspring of a king and a forest woman could be the heir to the throne if his mother could be projected as a semi-divine being. The story in the epic is not a simple love story but the story of a contest of power between man and woman, forest and settlement.

In the Kaṭṭhahāri Jātaka⁸, where the kernel of the Sakuntala story is fitted into the Buddhist ethical scheme, the forest maiden secretly married by the king, does not have a name or an Apsarā identity. Here the son, as Bodhisattva is the focal point of the narrative. The role of the mother is glossed over.

The court drama of Kālidāsa sprouts from a different historical milieu. Kālidāsa picks up the episode and shapes it into a different literary genre—the *nāṭaka*. Through centuries the image of Śakuntalā as the epitome of Indian womanhood has been derived from this drama, the other narratives having been pushed to the background. In the play the image of Śakuntalā deviates further from the swan maiden model. Against the backdrop of the expanding monarchical states the dichotomy between the forest and the settlement became more complex. Romila Thapar argues that, the āśrama now emerges as the incipient *agrahāra*, more or less a part of the ordered society (Thapar 2000). It is no longer the other world, but a sanitised, tame domestic space, with its daily chores and drudgery which the āśrama girls seem to enjoy, until Duṣyanta comes along. In this situation, the formation of feminine identity would essentially base itself on the husband-wife relationship. The mother-son relationship gradually receded into the background. Śakuntalā here is identified with nature, not with the wilds of the forest, but the tame, cultivated and fragile natural ambience of the āśrama. Her physical charm is packaged in a bashful spiritual beauty. Unlike the Apsarā she does not regulate her eroticism to assert power. This Śakuntalā would surely dissolve into domesticity. Kāma would give way to dharma through the birth of a male child.

As the āśramas merged into the *janapadas* the power of the king and the power of the ascetic were converging within the ambits of the āśrama. Apsarā Śakuntalā of the epic adapted to the ordered society and was ultimately content within it for the sake of her son. The hermit girl Śakuntalā of the drama moved more smoothly into the royal household. The linear romantic flow of the story was only disrupted by motifs drawn from the folk world of imagination—the curse and the ring subverted the linear track of the narrative. Duṣyanta like a folk hero surmounts tremendous obstacles and actually transcends the mundane realm to relocate Śakuntalā on a superior plane of existence, the āśrama of Mārīca.

Apart from these themes, the drama tries to build up an integrated picture of the royal household. The polygamous, patriarchal family was never a sanitised, harmonious space. The issue of succession further turned it into a locus of conflict. This tension escapes through cracks and fissures in the text but mostly stays hidden as a subterranean current. The polygamous household reflected images of men oscillating between reality principle and pleasure principle, between duty and desire. Thus the much aggrandised husband-wife relationship was never an uncomplicated terrain. It had to be smoothed out by building up a cluster female stereotypes. The image of Śakuntalā was such a stereotype to bridge the gap between male duty and male desire.

In male dominated societies, it is a deep rooted fear that the woman would revert back to the state of nature, though patriarchy entrusts her with the raising of the children and rooting them in culture. The swan maiden tales explore this cultural reality. The woman is always the other whether she hails from another culture or not. Everyday life for the

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woman is a site of oppression. The swan maiden steps down from her magical world to keep house and bear children to her mortal husband. As a woman's tale it conjures up this blissful, magical world.

As a man's tale, it articulates deep rooted male fear. The hero is convinced that, the deviant wife in search of happiness is insatiable, unable to ground herself into reality. But at the same time, men can not help being besotted with nymphs and fairies. It is the tendency to split the female image into two and attaching himself to two different kinds of women, inhabiting two worlds. The epic Śakuntalā retain traces of the other woman—alluring and mysterious, strong, self reliant, yet available. The modest maiden of the drama resolves the tension of the swan maiden narratives. She flaunts her physical charm yet is shy and demure, she is an outsider yet grounded in the values of the patriarchal society. This compromise shuts out the fabulous world of the swan maidens and Apsarās where one can fly through air and drown the chants of daily drudgery in heavenly music and songs.

In accordance with the norms of Sanskrit dramaturgy, Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika* is a Prakaraṇa. In such a composition the genesis of the plot emerges from the playwright's imagination and is neither legendary nor historical. The hero characterised as *dhīraśānta* (calm and self controlled) can either be a minister, a Brāhmaṇa or a merchant, whom fortune alludes. The choice of heroines can range from a high-born lady (in a Śuddha Prakaraṇa), a courtesan (in a Vikṛta Prakaraṇa) or both (in a Saṅkīrṇa Prakaraṇa) though in the case of the latter, the two are not to be shown as meeting on stage.

Being a drama in 10 Acts (Kale 1994), the interest of the audience is sustained, through its several unique features—pre-eminent amongst them being its cleverly conceived plot. It presents a realistic picture of contemporary society, where suspense is heightened by a variety of thrilling episodes that arouse alternating emotions of joy, curiosity, wonder, pity and even fear amongst the audience. The ingeniously planned plot, includes apart from the love between Chārudatta, a prominent but poor Brāhmaṇa of Ujjayinī and a scion of a family of Sārthavāha or merchants and Vasantasenā, an exquisitely beautiful and accomplished courtesan of the same city, a political intrigue leading to the overthrow of the wicked king Pālaka and the accession of Āryaka, the son of a cowherd and a tension packed trial scene in which the hero is saved from execution at the last moment. In a wide array of skilfully sketched individualised characters, drawn from different strata of society, Śūdraka deftly portrays the city's cosmopolitan character. Unlike a majority of Sanskrit dramas, the king here stays in the background. It is noticeable that the Prakaraṇa is not named after the hero nor the heroine, but after a certain incident in Act-VI, the significance of which will be discussed later. The original creativity of Śūdraka is restricted to the last five Acts (VI–X), the first five being an adaptation of the four Acts of Bhāsa's play *Daridra Chārudatta*.

The heroine of both the plays Vasantasenā is a courtesan, born and bred as such. However, in the very first Act, the playwright manages to convey to his audience, the exceptional

strength of her character which enables her to triumph over her circumstances and environment. She is being pursued by the wicked but powerful Śakara (Saṁsthānaka), the brother-in-law of king Pālaka of Ujjayinī, another villainous character, accompanied by his two followers Vita and Cheta. As she admonishes them, she is reminded by the Vita that she speaks in a manner contrary to her stay (that is, life) in the courtesan's quarter and that it was her duty to serve equally one much coveted by her and one disliked by her. True to the stereotypical image of a gaṇikā she was, "...like a creeper growing by the wayside. You possess a body that can be bought for money and hence is an article for sale..."⁹. But no amount of cajoling or threats can make her succumb to their avarice. She ignores the lure of wealth and power and in spite of being exposed to vile associations, as was natural to her lot, she refuses to be defiled. As the drama progresses, events in the play seem to have been construed by the author, to arouse amongst the audience, a sympathy for her destiny and indignance that society should ostracise a virtuous lady like her, merely due to accident of her birth in a gaṇikākula. It is no wonder that Chārudatta should consider her to be "...a lady fit to be waited upon worshipped like a goddess!", and is impressed that "...although she can talk boldly in a variety of ways owing to her familiarity with men, she does not speak boldly..."¹⁰. However, even he is compelled to recognise the conventional norms of an elite urban society for, on seeing Vasantasena, for the first time, he laments, "The passion inspired in me by whom subsides in my limbs like the anger of a cowardly person, now that my ample (large) fortune has declined..."¹¹. Vasantasena had already heard of his virtues and fallen in love with him, contrary though it was to the profession of a courtesan to become attached to a penniless man. Realising the impossibility of keeping up the acquaintance she takes recourse to an ingenious device; she leaves her ornaments with Chārudatta, ostensibly for safe custody, but really with the object of maintaining communication with him.

In Act-II, while revealing her love for the poor Brāhmaṇa Chārudatta, to her maid Madanikā she states firmly that in this particular relationship it was her intention to enjoy and not to serve. Since then, she is so devoted and steadfast in her love for Chārudatta that she cannot tolerate the very idea of entertaining any other suitor. Her passion for Chārudatta grows so intense in the end that she goes to visit him as an abhisārika¹², in spite of a raging thunderstorm. When finally in Act-VIII, Śakara persecutes her with his attention, she is ready to even accept death at his hands, rather than prove faithless to her lover, and apparently, she dies, uttering the words, "Bow to the noble Chārudatta". The audience is moved by this intense loyalty of her love and depth of her affection. However, this love is not merely sensuous or erotic, for there is ample proof in the play that both the characters recognise each other's virtues and Vasantasena is heard saying, "I am a slave of his honour Chārudatta, bought by his merits".

That magnanimity is no close preserve of birth and lineage and that a debasing environment is no impediment to what is intrinsically noble can be evinced from her

generosity in readily paying off the debt of Samvahaka¹³ and releasing, her chief attendant maid from bondage¹⁴ in spite of seeing through Sarvilaka's deception and realising that the ornament offered to her as ransom for Madanikā were her own, stolen from Chārudatta's custody.

Act VI of the play contains the clue to the naming of the drama *Mṛcchakaṭika*. After spending the night at Chārudatta's house because of the thunderstorm, Vasantasenā is about to leave when she hears his son Rohasena crying. On enquiry she learns that he is upset that his playmates of the merchant square play with golden carts, while he has only been given a little earthen toy cart. As she consoles him, Rohasena asks his attendant maid Radanikā who she was. The latter replies, "Child, the ladyship is your mother"¹⁵. The child declines to consider her as such because she happens to be wearing ornaments, unlike his own mother. Saddened, Vasantasenā takes off her ornaments, fills the clay cart with them and declares, "Now I have become your mother! So please take these ornaments and get a golden cart made (out of them)". Here one can almost feel the pleasure that she derives in giving full play to her maternal instincts. This is one of her most tender moments, when on seeing Rohasena (but not knowing who he was), she explains, "The moon-faced one gladdens my heart, even though his body is unadorned with ornaments". Since these very ornaments, subsequently serve as the final proof of Chārudatta's supposed crime, it may be asserted that the poet's choice of the title of the play on the basis of this incident is justified. The handing over of her ornaments perhaps symbolises the dismantling of a barrier (wealth in the form of gold ornaments) that had stood between her and Chārudatta and made them more accessible to each other. In the opinion of Dr. Sukumari Bhattacharya (Bhattacharya Magha 1396 : 142), there are in the play two sets of characters—those who are powerful but villainous and those who are honest but poverty stricken. It is only Vasantasenā who is wealthy but honest. When on the stage, she fills the clay cart with her ornaments she joins those characters who represent the clay cart, being poor and brittle (meaning weak) on the outside (like Vasantasenā being born in the *gaṇikākūla*, the poverty of Chārudatta and other honest characters), but in their inner strength of character, they resemble the purity of the gold ornaments deposited in the cart. The main intention of the play seems to be encapsulated in this incident, hence the justification of the naming of the play, *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

Both the main characters of the play, Chārudatta and Vasantasenā reveal deep inner emotional conflicts. Chārudatta is married to Dhutā and has a son Rohasena, in whose company, he "finds recreation". He is torn between his affection and sense of duty towards them on the one hand and his deep seated love for Vasantasenā on the other, which according to societal norms is impossible to reach fruition, as a *gaṇikā* can only be bought with money¹⁶ of which presently he has none. Vasantasenā is a *gaṇikā*; her love for Chārudatta seems to be heading nowhere because the latter does not possess the means

of reaching her. But in spite of her intense pain and longing, she always refers to Dhutā reverentially as “worthy” and it is at her behest that in the last Act Chārudatta is saved from execution and Dhutā from self immolation.

Śūdraka’s delineation of the development of Vasantasenā’s passion with touches of tenderness, endears her to the audience and raises her character to an impressive level. Indeed her uncourtesanlike leanings, make it more appropriate to designate her as a *Kulastrī* than a *gaṇikā*. In fact it seems a fitting grand finale to the play that she is recognised as the *badhu* of Chārudatta in the final act.

Notes

1. All references to the drama of Kālidāsa are from: Kale, M.R., 1990, *The Abhijñāna-śākuntalam of Kālidāsa*, Delhi.
2. xiii, 5.4.11, cited in Kosambi, D.D., 1983 (reprint) : ‘Urvaśī and Purūravas’, in *Myth and Reality*, Bombay.
3. *Mahābhārata* 1.62-1.69.
4. Only a passing reference to the story can be found in the Mahābhārata. For the variants of the story and an elaborate analysis see, Kosambi, D.D., 1983 (reprint): ‘Urvaśī and Purūravas’, in *Myth and Reality*, Bombay.
5. *Mahābhārata* 1.91 – 1.93.
6. *Mahābhārata* 1.5.7.
7. This argument is fleshed out in detail in Thapar, Romila, 1999: *Śakuntalā: Texts, Readings, Histories*, New Delhi.
8. Cowell, E.B. (ed.), 2005 (reprint): *The Jātaka*, Vol-I, No. 7.
9. Act I, pp. 36-7.
10. Act 11, pp. 61-2.
11. Act I, pp. 58-59.
12. Act V, pp. 189-190.
13. Act II, pp. 91-92.
14. Ibid., pp. 149-150.
15. Ibid., pp. 218-19.
16. Act V, p. 173.

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Role of Local Trade Networks In Early Tamilakam¹

VIKASH KUMAR VERMA

Much researchs have undergone regarding the long-distance contacts and maritime exchange networks of the Tamil region during the ancient period. The scholastic works, hitherto, have paid much attention to the trading activities of Tamilakam with other parts of the Indian subcontinent; the Mediterranean World, Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka in the Early Historic period (*circa* 3rd century B.C. to 4th century A.D.). The literary and archaeological sources provide a plethora of data about the contacts of the Tamils with distant lands. On the other hand, the local trade networks in the Tamil region have received inadequate attention.

Talking of the trading activities in Peninsular India, it is very important to understand the hinterland-coast relationship. The port cities located on the coast should not be viewed in isolation while discussing the maritime contacts. The inland routes including both, the land routes and the riverine routes, feeded the coastal sites with the products of the inland centres. Similarly, the foreign products involved in the international trade also reached the interior areas through these routes. Nonetheless, in the case of foreign trade in Tamil region, especially the Indo-Roman trade, the land route through the Palghat Pass (Coimbatore region) connected the ports on the western coast with those of the eastern coast. This route and its branches passed through many industrial and commercial centres of the inland region. Secondly, these routes, besides their involvement in the internal and international trade, also served the purpose of pilgrims, military and for the day-to-day use of the common people. In other words, these routes helped in the movement of goods as well as people for different reasons. Thus, the local trade networks were vital not only for the fulfillment of local needs but also for the overseas interactions. This is why the hinterland-port relations occupy a significant place in the context of the study of local trade networks.

Regional or local trade can be distinguished from the long-distance trade on the basis of various factors involved in these. The local trade takes place within cultural units and the travel time is short, generally a few days. This is carried through the available mode of transport including the beasts of burden such as caravans of pack animals. The traders either stay in the *serais* built for them or with their relatives on their way to a particular destination. The geographical area covered in this is very big. Local trade can be carried out with small infrastructures and investments. The long-distance trade, on the other hand, involves cross-cultural exchanges over a wider geographical horizon. This is carried by multiple trading groups with specialized traders who set out for weeks or months. However, cross-distance exchanges may occur as the result of single lengthy voyages, such as sea voyages between India and the Mediterranean world, or as the cumulative effect of

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successive local and regional transfers (Smith 2002). Long-distance trade also needs larger infrastructures and investments than used in local trade. In this, the skilled traders participate with bigger and specialized modes of transport such as suitable kinds of boats/vessels/ ships for maritime trade or carriages for overland journey.

TRADE ROUTES

The land routes as well as the water routes (the riverine/canal routes and the sea routes) facilitated the trading activities in ancient Tamilakam. The land routes played a leading role to harmonise the unevenly distributed economic resources of South India, especially the Tamil region. This helped in the flow of goods from one part to another which was far from the coastal belt and where the river navigation was not possible. In other words, the overland routes joined the hinterland centres with the ports.

The mountain gaps (passes) played a significant role by providing the space to the routes linking the trade centres across the Ghats as well as the centres of both the eastern and the western coasts of the peninsula. The Ghats with their elevated and wooded reliefs with wild ridges isolate the west coast from the rest of the peninsula. The only passage could be found between the two pillars of the Nilgiris and the Anamalai hills. The abrupt interruption in the chain of these mountain ranges created gaps such as the Palghat Pass, the Guzzalgatty Pass, the Toppur Pass and the Aramboli Pass. The Palghat and the Aramboli passes are located in the far north and south of the chain respectively. The Palghat Pass provided the most popular route since the dawn of civilization. It affords low-land access between the Malabar Coast and the Tamil region at a level of about 1000 feet above the sea. The Aramboli Pass though played an important role was not used frequently by the traders, probably due to its smaller gap and the location to the far south. The distribution of the Roman coins and the references in the *Sangam* texts attest the fact that the Palghat Pass channeled the traffic from Kerala to the Tamil region since the beginning of history. A direct link through the pass linked the two coasts. Thus, the traders could avoid the hazardous circumnavigation of Cape Comorin (Deloche 1993: 74, Suresh 2007: 20-38).

There existed roads/thoroughfares perhaps in the *kuṟiñci* (the hills) and *pālai* (the dry land) regions. These witnessed the frequent movement of people, animals and vehicles. There are references to the beaten paths in the hilly tracts and arid regions, which were used originally by animals like elephants, deer and cattle. These tracks were steep and difficult to traverse. The travellers passing through these were often at risk with the fear of robbers. Therefore, the traders used to move with their loaded carts or beasts of burden to different villages in small groups called *Vāṇikacāttukkal* (Pillay 1975: 240-1). The foreign accounts such as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Casson 1989: 83, Schoff 1974: 42-7) and that of Fa-Xian (Legge 1965: 75, 117) also mention that contrary to North India, the roads in South India were dangerous and hard to travel. There also existed the

road networks within the towns. The width of these roads depended upon the size of the towns. There also were also the highways referred to as *Peruvaḷi*, which connected villages and towns. These were the constructed roads. The tolls were levied at the entrance to the towns and at the crossroads (Pillay 1975: 241).

Based on the description in the *Arthaśāstra*² (Kangle 1986: 355-6, 399, 434; Shamasastri 1967: 53, 331-2, 397) and the Buddhist texts (Misra 1972: 264, Rhys-Davids 1970: 42, 44-5), the various kinds of roads in ancient India may be grouped under three divisions: (i) *Mahāpatha/Mahāmārga* or *Rāstrapatha* (grand trunk road/national highways), (ii) *Vāṇikapatha* (trade routes) and (iii) *Rājāmārga* (king's highway/ routes linking administrative, military, social, cultural and religious centres). However, these should not be studied as isolated groups since it is but natural that all these types of roads were vital for commercial exchange. This is because of the fact that mobility is the basis for the development of communication and exchange process and is a determining factor for trading activities. The famous routes—*Dakṣiṇāpatha*, *Pubbantapatha* and *Aparāntapatha* linked the different regions of South India with other parts of the subcontinent. Besides these highways, there existed various routes in Early Tamiḷakam which helped in trading activities at the local level (Chandra 1977: 70-108, 154, 157).

The *Sangam* texts such as the *Śilappadikāram* (Naidu et al 1979: 127-38) and the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 3-4) mention two important routes in the Tamil region. The first route linked Kāñcīpuram to Puhār (Kāveripattinam), which was a large port. The second route linked Kāñcīpuram to Kanyākumari (Cape Comorin) passing through Śrīrangam, Uṇaiyūr, Karūr, Madurai and Koṟkai (Deloche 1993: 74).

The *Mahābhārata* (Buitenan 1975: 332) mentions various trade routes (*Vāṇikapatha*) in *Dakṣiṇāpatha*. One important route in the Tamil region ran in the north-south direction connecting Kāveripattinam and Nāgapattinam. Kautilya (Shamasastri 1967: 331-2) also mentions different land and water routes from north to south, and regards the routes leading to the south along the western coast (*Aparāntapatha*) as more important than those leading to the Himalayas, because the former carried a large volume of traffic in merchandise of various kinds and involved a large number of traders. This route connected Kanyākumari with other regions of South India and extended up to the Bolan Pass in the northwest region of the Indian subcontinent.

The inscriptions of the later periods found in the Tamil region also mention about two distinct classes of roads. The first type was called, the *Valis*, which were slightly better than footpaths and probably not suitable for the wheeled traffic. There is the mention of one such *Valis* in Uttaramēṛūr inscription of the Cholas (*EI* 9 of 1898, Sastri 2000: 594). The second type included the *Peruvaḷi*, (long route) or the *Neduvaḷi* (highway) was the better class of roads, which are known as the great roads in the inscriptions (Mudaliar 2000: 15, 87). These were the trunk roads leading from one large division of the country to another.

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This is well reflected in their names like the Andhra road, the *Vaduga Peruvaḻi*, or *Andhrapatha* (*SII* 111: 64, Sastri 2000: 594); the great road to Kongu, the *Kongu Peruvaḻi*, (*EI* 281 of 1911), the big road to Peṇṇadam (*EI* 281 of 1911), the *Taṇjavūr Peruvaḻi*, of the Aduturai inscription (*EI* 363 of 1907), a *Peruvali*, probably leading to Kāñcīpuram mentioned in the Tamil inscription at Aragalūr (9th-10th centuries A.D.) in Salem district (*IAR* 1990-91: 85) and the most significant of all is the great road leading to Kalyanapuram mentioned in an inscription from Taṇjavūr district (*EI* 203 of 1908, Sastri 2000: 594-5).

The accounts of the later periods, especially those of the European travellers during the Vijayanagara and the post-Vijayanagara period, contain prolific description of the road networks in the Tamil country. The main routes ran along with the meshes of a network corresponding to the ancient road links and which hardly differs from the present-day road system along the short segments. So, the idea for ancient routes can also be gathered from the routes followed in the later periods. These accounts also refer to a land route connecting the great religious centres from Kalahasti located in the north of Tirupati to Rāmeśvaram (Deloche 1993: 75). It can be assumed that this passed through other religious centres like Kāñcīpuram, Śrīrangapattanam and Madurai before reaching Rāmeśvaram. The geographical description of the land routes of the Tamil country by Robert Orme (1805) and James Rennell (1782) in the second half of the 18th century A.D. is noteworthy in this context. The description reveals the existence of a network of longitudinal routes between Lake Pulicat and Kanyakumari or Rāmeśvaram. It met at recognized points such as Śrīrangam, Tiruchirappalli and Madurai.

Besides the above mentioned road networks linking the northern region to the southern one, there were routes connecting the western and eastern regions in ancient Tamiḻakam. Of these, the most important was the route through the Palghat Pass linking the west coast to the east coast. However, this important network from the west to the east extending from the Palghat Pass, comprised of two principle axis. The first leading towards the east coast passed through Salem and the lower valley of the river Pennaiyaru. As mentioned earlier, a later period Tamil inscription dated 9th-10th centuries A.D. from a Śiva temple at Aragalūr in the Salem district also refers to a highway (*Peruvaḻi*) probably leading to Kāñcīpuram (*IAR* 1990-91: 85). The second followed the river Kaveri through Taṇjavūr as far as the ports on the Kaveri delta adjoining the Bay of Bengal (Deloche 1993: 85). In this connection it is important to note that though rouletted ware are found at many sites in different regions of India, its occurrence in the Tamil region is attributed to the communication network between the east and the west coasts through the Palghat Pass. The numismatic finds such as the Seleucid bronze coins (3rd century B.C.), and Phoenician copper coins (2nd century B.C.) from Karūr (Vañci/Vaṇji) also suggest that in the process of commercial exchanges, Karūr acted as the main centre for export, which via the Palghat Pass was linked to Musiri (Muciri /Muziris), a port on the west coast (Nagaswamy 2003: 42-50).

A recent study by P. Ravitchandirane³ is worth mentioning in this context. On the basis of the examination of a series of finds like potsherds, a ringwell and debris of ancient architecture at Koṭṭaimēḍu situated along the banks of the Gingee river in Pondicherry, he shows a clear direct connection between Arikāmēḍu to the inland centres. The discoveries at Koṭṭaimēḍu suggest contact between Arikāmēḍu and Koṭṭaimēḍu as early as the beginning of the Christian era. They also indicate that inland transshipment was not continued through the Gingee river and its banks beyond Suthukēni and Tiruvākkarai. The debris at the surface attests that Koṭṭaimēḍu was an urban centre during the classical trade phase of Arikāmēḍu. Thus, it could have been linked with Koṭṭaimēḍu by an overland route running from the east to the west as it is located west of Arikāmēḍu (Verma 2005 : 278-9). However, further investigations along the Pambai river and Koṭṭaimēḍu are required to investigate the inland trade network of Arikāmēḍu.

Now coming to the water routes, we find the references to both the riverine and coastal routes in the ancient literature like the *Vedas* (Chand 1980 : 106), the *Rāmāyana* (Lal 1981 : 63, 159, 187, 199, 265; Sattar 1996 : 144-5, 319-25, 449-50), the *Mahābhārata* (Buitenan 1975 : 332), the *Arthaśāstra* (Shamasastri 1967 : 331), the *Indica* (McCrindle 1960 : 32-3, 62, 174-5, 192-200, 206-7), etc. The former (riverine) was termed as the *Nadipatha* and the latter (sea/coastal), the *Kulāpatha* (Pattanayak 1997). However, of these two kinds of water routes, the river routes played an important role in conveying goods from the interior to the coastal parts and vice versa, thus contributing much to the local trade. The sea routes were more important for the coastal trade.

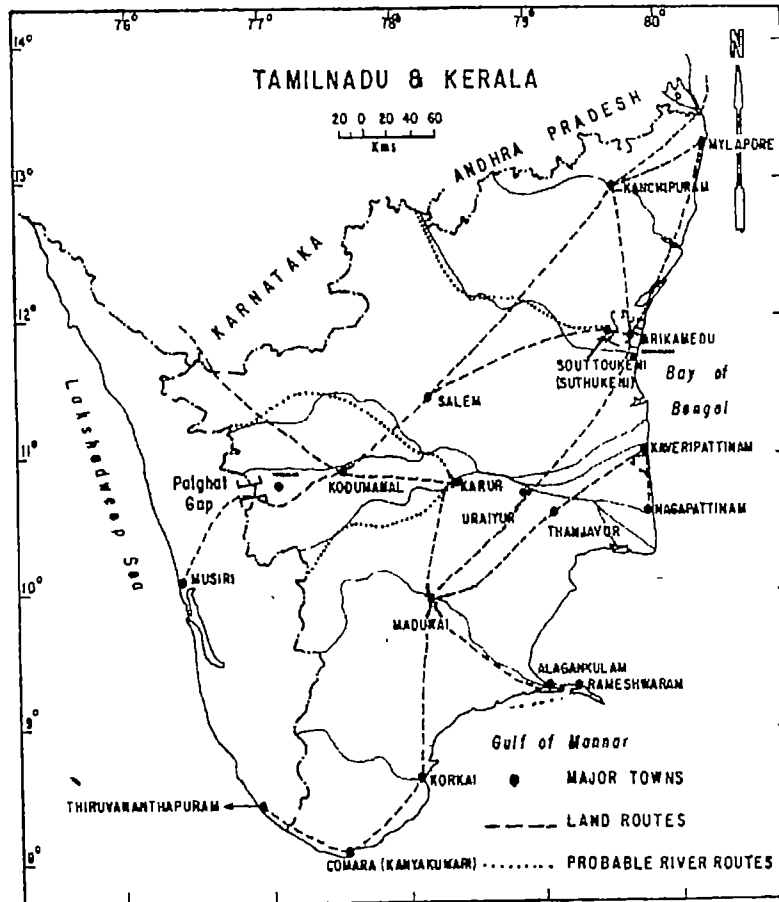
In the Tamil region, we find that in accordance with the general slope of the land, the rivers flow for most part from the west to the east into the Bay of Bengal. The region drained by the rivers running westwards, thus, forms only a narrow strip of territory between the Western Ghats and the sea. There is a gradual slope from the eastern base of the western mountain chain down to the Coromandel coast, while the fall is sudden and precipitous on the western side of the mountains. The coastline is interspersed with rivers but they are generally shallow.

The main rivers of the Tamil region are the Palar, the Southern Pennar (Pennaiyar), the Vellar the Kaveri, the Vaigai and the Tamraparani. All these rivers rise in the crest of the Western Ghats and flow through Tamilnadu into the Bay of Bengal. Of these, the Kaveri with her tributaries namely the Bhavani, the Amaravati, the Noyyal, etc. have played the most significant role since ancient times (Rajan 1997 : 12-3). Till today, the river Kaveri drains more than one-third of the region. A number of these rivers were perennial but they ebb and flow in dry seasons and the seasons of the southwest monsoon rains differ markedly. Some of the rivers dry up totally in the long dry months. On the other hand, the torrential flow of the monsoon rains from October to December brings down huge quantities of soil, which are deposited at the points where the rivers flow into the sea.

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It is worth noting that almost all the coastal ports of the ancient Tamil region were situated on the river mouths. Arikāmēdu (Poduke), Kāvēripattinam (Puhār/Poompuhār), Aḷagankuḷam and Koṟkai (Koichi/ Kolkhoi) were such ancient ports. Arikāmēdu, for example, is located 4 kilometers south of Pondicherry in a curve of the river Ariyankuppam just before it joins the Bay of Bengal. Today, the Ariyankuppam is no more than a shallow lagoon of brackish water. But the maps and other records of the 17th–18th centuries A.D. suggest that it was the major branch of the Gingee river and navigable at its mouth, and the same was probably true in the ancient past (Athiyaman 1997). According to V. Begley (1993, 1996: 9-10), despite the bend in the open sea, the Gingee river has access to it. This fact, in her opinion, may have been instrumental in selection of the site for the port on the coastline, which has almost no natural harbours.

However, as mentioned earlier, even from the available facts it is doubtful whether trade through inland waterways in the Tamil region had developed in any considerable measure



MAP-1: Showing the Major Towns, Land Routes and River Routes in Early Tamilakam.

during the early historical period. The streams running through the hilly tracts hardly streams running through the hilly tracts hardly fitted the purpose. Even the rivers flowing through the plains were not suitable on account of the frequent droughts, floods and whirlpools. For example, a recent survey in this context by P. Ravitchandirane (Verma 2005 : 232-3), as mentioned before, suggests that inland transshipment was not continued through the river Gingee and its banks beyond Suthukeni and Tiruvakkarai. Probably, the geological Archaean (granite) formation at Tiruvākkarai region hindered the accessibility of the river Gingee to the urban centres of central South India. It is therefore, clear that the river Pambai had been used for transshipment of commodities to the inland centres via the southern section of the river Pennar. So, it is perhaps not correct to state that these were no riverine routes, but those which existed were also affected by geological changes from time to time. As a result, many were reduced to the state of disuse for navigational purposes with the passage of time. Moreover, it is worth noting that the presence of the overland routes along the river tracks indicate that these were more convenient for transportation of goods to and from the coastal ports. Another reason which may be argued in favour of this assumption is that these tracks functioned as the links for the limited traffic though the rivers and streams that were confined to carrying of commodities or merchants across the channel.

TRADE GOODS

As mentioned earlier, the hinterland served both the local as well as the coastal trade. It is not only a source of goods possessing export value but also a zone of consumption for imported commodities from other countries. At local level, the hinterland region acts as a supplier of the items desired by the local population. As one particular site may not function as both production and consumption centres of a particular product, an exchange network is crucial. However, in some cases, a site can be a manufacturer as well as a consumer of the same product. As a result of the uneven agricultural productivity due to varying physiographic factors, it was obvious for the different regions of Tamilakam to participate in exchange activities.

Archaeological data and literary references enable us to know about the variety of the manufactured and traded commodities in and around the Tamil region during the early historical period. Foreign accounts and *Sangam* literature are the major literary sources, which throw light on the items of trade. However, the texts written by the foreigners suffer from serious limitations as they ignored the Indian point of view while describing the articles of trade. For instance, the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Casson 1989 : 21-9, 39-43, 209; Schoff 1974 : 42, 44-5, 46-7. 284-8) was written from a Mediterranean point of view and therefore talks much about the profitable items for long-distance exchange. As it was written by a Greek merchant, it cares much for a merchant's concern and little for the goods traded at the local levels.

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Nevertheless, these references, though limited, help us to know about the production and consumption centres of a particular commodity. *Sangam* texts, on the other hand, provide earthy details of the Tamil region in this context. For instance, the *Śilappadikāram* (Naidu et al 1979 : 37-9, 60) refers to a number of commodities and the associated craftsmen of Puhār (Kāvēripaṭṭinam).

Local trade involved the commercial exchanges between the towns and the surrounding countryside. Two important factors, on which the nature of the merchandise depended, were the capacity of the carriages to sustain load and the time taken for journey. In other words, for carrying heavy articles the size and power of the carrier, either cart or animal, was important, whereas the time factor was vital in the case of trading food products and other decaying or perishable goods.

Peninsular India does not have extensive agrarian plains as North India. The geomorphological features of South India formed the basis for the productions and occupations in different regions marked by different features viz. fertile plains, wooded areas, hilly regions, coastal tracts, etc. The *Sangam* texts mention the five-fold classification of land (*tiṇai*)— the hills (*kuṟiñci*), the dry lands (*pālai*), the jungles and woodland areas (*mullai*), the cultivated plains or agricultural land (*marudam*) and the coast (*neydal*) (Arokiaswami 1972: 84, Pillay 1975: 160-88, Subramanian 1988). These regions were inhabited respectively by the *kuṟavars*, *maṟavars*, *āyars*, *uḷavars* and the *paradavars*. However, this distribution was largely conventional and so transgression of the regional barriers in respect of occupation was frequent. For example, the *kuṟavar* of the *kuṟiñci* regions could settle in the *mullai* and become an *āyar* (a cowherd) and after migrating to *marudam* took to cultivation and became an *uḷavar* (an agriculturalist). Similarly, an *uḷavar* could become a *kuṟavar*. Some occupations like that of the *paradavar* were specialized in nature and were practiced in coastal areas. The Chera region existed as a distinct geographical and political entity that had trade contacts with the cities of the Harappan culture as early as 2500 B.C. The Cholas had control over the fertile Kaveri delta. The Pāndyas ruled over the predominantly pastoral districts including Madurai, Tirunelveli and Rāmanāthapuram. The chieftains occupied mostly the fringes covered by the hilly tracts. Due to this geographical diversity, the exchange of goods through the barter system was a common practice. For example, the *kuṟiñci* people exchanged their goods like honey, toddy, etc. for the food grains from the people of other regions. Similarly, the inhabitants of the *mullai* region exchanged milk, curd, butter milk, butter, etc. for other essential items. Likewise, the people of *marudam* exchanged their products such as sugarcane, rice *aval* (rice flakes), etc. for other desired commodities. So did the people of the *neydal* region by exchanging fish, ghee, honey and fish oil for other required items such as paddy, milk, butter, etc (Jayasurya 1980: 26-7). The commodities, which were complementary to each other in satisfying the needs of people, were often sold together. For instance, sugarcane

and rice flakes were together exchanged for venison and toddy. Similarly, buffaloes were purchased in exchange for ghee (Pillay 1975: 240). The absence of any systematic coinage can be assigned as a reason for the prevalence of the barter system in the early historic Tamiḻakam. The only exception was the use of some indigenous coins including gold *kāśu*, *kāṇam* and punch-marked coins in the local trade, and Roman gold and other metal/alloy coins in the Indo-Roman trade (Brown 2009: 52). However, besides this assessment of the main characteristics of each region, the ecological zones were not isolated from one another. Therefore, a particular region could also possess the distinctive traits of the other regions.

Let us now discuss the various kinds of products that were cultivated, manufactured and traded in Tamil region. These products can broadly be classified into—agricultural and forest products, marine products, industrial products and animal products.

(i) Agricultural and Forest Products

As mentioned above, the different geographical regions of Tamiḻakam specialized in certain types of products and developed exchange networks to obtain the desired articles of other regions. The *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 361-5) mentions a variety of hill products like ginger, turmeric, pepper, etc. The *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhavia 2000: 76) refers to the spice-shops at Vañji (Karūr).

Other cultivated regions produced agricultural products such as common paddy (rice), red rice, sugarcane, coconut, tamarind, plantains, palm-fruit, arecanut, turmeric, sweet variety of mango, jackfruits, sandal, flowers, cotton and a variety of other fruits and spices. There are references to women selling flowers in exchange for other commodities (Pillay 1975: 191-2, 240; Raghunathan 1997: 58).

Paddy was a staple crop. The *Sangam* texts mention several varieties of paddy cultivated during the period concerned. They included *veṇṇel*, *aivananel*, *tōrai*, *chennel* and *pudunel*. From the references it appears that the first three varieties were chiefly cultivated on the slopes of hills (*kuṟiñci*) (Raghunathan 1997: 27) while the refined varieties, the *chennel* and *pudunel*, were grown in the fertile plains. Bamboo paddy (rice), according to the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 67) was grown in the hilly regions and was consumed by the hill tribes. Paddy cultivation is also referred to in poems like the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 58). The processing of sugarcane by crushing, grinding and boiling in mills is mentioned in the *Perumpāṇāṟruppadaḻ* (Raghunathan 1997: 82) and the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 58). The latter also refers to the kinds of fruits and spices mentioned above. The *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 76) records the existence of evening *bazaars* with cries of the hawkers of different species of fruits. As mentioned earlier, the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhavia 2000: 76) also refers to the spice-shops of Vañji (Karūr).

Sandalwood was an important product of the Tamil region as shown in the *Neḍunalvāḍai*. The sandal grindstones were brought from the adjoining Andhra region

(Raghunathan 1997: 48). Sandalwood from the Karnataka region was also accessible (Raghunathan 1997: 58). Besides hawking from door to door, the products were also sold in shops (Mudaliar 2000: 72, 76).

Pepper was an important product and was very much in demand in the Chera country. According to the *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 76) pepper sacks were carried on donkey backs. The *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 58) mentions bags of black pepper brought by cart. Pepper as an important hill product is also recorded in the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 67). The *Sangam* texts refer to Greek merchants as the *Yavanas*, which is derived from the name used for Indians, *Yavanapriya* ('beloved of the Greeks'). This indicates that pepper, especially of black variety, was much in demand by the Greeks. However, pepper along with other varieties of spices were important agricultural products, which were transported from their areas of production to other regions of the Indian subcontinent and other countries lacking this product.

(ii) Marine Products

The important marine products included salt, pearls, coral, shell, conches and, of course, fish.

Salt was an important item of trade as it was the basic ingredient for food. It has been suggested by some scholars that the trade in Tamiḻakam began in the *neydal*. Although salt was one of the necessities in demand from early times, paddy and other grains were even more fundamental requisites. Therefore, K. K. Pillay (1975: 239) differs from the above view that highlighted the origin of trade in coastal areas. Nevertheless, it is certain that with the advancement of settled life, paddy and salt became the principal commodities of trade. Salt was supplied from the coastal belt to the different regions in carts by the salt traders called *umaṇar* and *umaṭṭiyar*. The *Sangam* texts refer to salt vendors and salt-fields (Mudaliar 2000: 60, Raghunathan 1997: 76). The *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 75-6) and the *Śīrupāṇārruppadai* (Mudaliar 2000 : 44) mention the caravan carts of the salt vendors, which were driven by oxen. According to the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 59-61, 68), the merchant community called *baratha* (*barata*) was chiefly involved in salt growing and salt trade. The sale of salt is also mentioned in the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 58). The *Maṇimēkalai* (Mudaliar 2000: 67, 76) refers to the salt-pans of the Kāveripattinam city and also to the markets at Vañji (Karūr) where white salt was hawked.

Pearl fisheries were confined to the Gulf of Mannar and Koṟkai was a world famous centre for this. So, the pearls, chank and other marine products from the coastal areas were exchanged with the products of the interior regions. The *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 58) refers to the pearl obtained from the Southern Sea (Koṟkai). In the *Śīrupāṇārruppadai* (Mudaliar 2000: 44) and the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 60), Koṟkai is described as an important centre of pearl-fishing and the latter added to the prosperity of the city. According to the *Śilappadikāram* (Naidu et al 1979: 262-3), the anklet of Kaṇṇagi, its heroine, contained rubies whereas that of the Pāṇḍyan queen had pearls in it.

Chank is mentioned as the most prized of all shells in the *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai*. This work further mentions the chank industry at Kāñcīpuram (Raghunathan 1997: 75). Along with pearl-fishing, conches too were obtained from the sea. The *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 60, 68, 76) refers to various conch products such as conch bangles, conch whistlers, etc.

Fishing has been a significant activity in coastal areas since our ancient past. The *baratha* (barata) community mentioned in literary works was chiefly occupied with fishing and salt-growing. Basically, they were the traders of these marine products (Mudaliar 2000: 59, 61). According to the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 76), Vañji (Karūr) had markets where many kinds of fishes were hawked even by women.

(iii) Industrial Products

Industrial commodities consisted of the products made of metals like gold, silver, copper, etc.; different kinds of semiprecious stones, gems, etc.; cotton and wool, etc.

Gems and gold from the northern mountains are mentioned in the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 63). It seems that the regions referred to here is the Kolar hill regions, which have been famous for gold mining since ancient times (Pillay 1975: 89). The use of gold jewellery is also evident in Tamil classics like the *Śīlappadikāram* (Naidu *et al* 1979: 58). The *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 82) and the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 76) refer to the goldsmiths and the jewellers selling necklaces strung of beads made of gems like blue sapphires, corals and pearls. According to the *Śīlappadikāram*, as mentioned before, the anklet of Kaṇṇagi, Kovalan's wife, had rubies in it. The *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 54) refers to the diamond cutter from Magadha, goldsmiths from Maharashtra, artificers from Avanti, carpenters from Yavana and skilled craftsmen of the Tamil region—all working at Kāveripattinam. It also mentions about the dealers in precious stones, and smiths who wrought in copper, silver, gold and other metals and alloys at *bazaar* in Vañji (Karūr) (Madhaviah 2000: 76). From these references it is clear that goldsmiths described as Poṟkōllar flourished in the *Sangam* period. They were also known as *Poṇ Śey Kōllanār*. Apparently, *Poṇ Vāṇiganār* was a goldsmith who traded in gold and its ornaments (Pillay 1975: 89).

The literary references and archaeological finds have established the fact of bead-making at various sites. The *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 78) refers to the round beads of Kāñcī (Kāñcīpuram/Kānchipuram) and its neighbourhood. The bead-making industry flourished at Arikāmēḍu, Kāñcīpuram, Koḍumaṇal and many other sites.

Besides the crafts related with the metals, semiprecious stones and gems, there existed various other workmen associated with the manufacture of other products. For example, the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 76) mentions the streets of potters, carpenters, sculptors, artisans, painters, shoe-makers, tailors, garland-makers, astrologers, musicians, bangle-makers, grain merchants, gold traders, etc. at the *bazaar* in Vañji (Karūr).

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Weaving was a significant craft of the Tamil region. The *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudhaviah 2000: 76) mentions the weavers selling saris at Madurai. In some *Sangam* works, finely woven cloth has been compared with the slough of smoke, the foam of milk, the cast-off skin of a snake and the white torrent of water falling from a high hill and so on. Although these descriptions may appear to be exaggerated and romanticized, these reflect the prevalent skilled art of weaving. Uṟaiyūr was a famous centre for high-quality cloth production. Different varieties of clothes are mentioned in the *Sangam* classics but only the *Śilappadikāram* refers to as many as thirty-two varieties of cotton cloth. Some fine varieties of cloth were brought from other regions and thus, were called after the name of the concerned region. For example, ‘*Kalingam*’ was a very fine quality of cloth from the Kalinga country. There are also references to the fine dresses made of silk. Although silk clothes were woven in Tamiḷakam, silk was originally introduced from China and hence called ‘*Sīnam*’/‘*Chīnam*’ (Pillay 1975: 203-5). Cotton, wool and barks of trees were also used as materials for cloth production. Spinning was largely practiced by women. Women engaged in the spinning of cotton yarn were called *paruttiṇḍu* or *paruttiṇḍir*. A wool merchant of *Kāveripaṭṭinam* is also referred to in the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 72).

(iv) Animal Products

Different kinds of animals and animal products were also exchanged between different regions of the Indian subcontinent as well as other distant countries. The earliest Hebrew and Tamil accounts mention the lucrative trade carried by Tamil merchants from circa 1000 B.C. onwards. The words used for certain animals and articles including certain spices in Hebrew and Aramaic seem to have been borrowed from the Dravidian language. The Holy Testament (the *Book of Kings* in the Bible) refers to these in connection with the visit of Queen Sheba to King Solomon of Israel in around 990 B.C. (Sastri 2007: 71-2, Subramanian 1988: 30-1). For example, ‘*tuki*’ in Hebrew meaning peacock sounds similar to Tamil ‘*tōgai*’ for the same. Likewise, ‘teak’, ‘sandal’ and ‘corundum’ are probably derived from the Tamil words ‘*tekkum*’, ‘*sandanam*’ and ‘*kurumdam*’ respectively. This, nevertheless, suggests the trade relations of the Tamils with Babylonia, Mesopotamia and other countries of western Asia (Pillay 1975: 251-2, Subramanian 1988: 30).⁴

The *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 76) refers to the sheep markets and meat-stalls at Vañji bazaar. According to the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 68) the horses from Arabia were exchanged for the products of the Tamil land, which were rare in those countries. The *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 63) also records that the cities of South India imported horses by the sea. The *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 79) mentions that buttermilk was exchanged for buffaloes and black calves. Till today, buttermilk remains an important part of the diet in the Tamil region.

TRADE MECHANISM

While dealing with the trade networks, either local or long-distance, it is important to understand the mechanism of trade operation. For this we have to look at the nature of the sites, that is, if a particular site was a production or distribution centre. Moreover, for examining the mechanism one has to also take into account the means of transport, places of exchange such as *bazaars*, etc., modes of exchange such as hawking by vendors, installed shops, etc. Our focus here would be on the local and regional exchange patterns.

(i) Production/Manufacturing and Distribution Centres

On the basis of archaeological evidence and literary references one can identify the geographical locations of important manufacturing or production sites for various articles items. In the case of Tamiḻakam, as in the other regions too⁵, it is important to observe that the types of trade goods found include: (i) the goods (ceramics, coins, beads) involved in overseas trade (Roman, Southeast Asian, etc.) (ii) the goods (ceramics, coins, beads, shell and glass products, etc.) made of the locally available raw materials as well as some resources obtained from other regions of the subcontinent, and (iii) the goods (textiles, agricultural products, marine products, etc.) for local/domestic use, which were very much meant for inland trade too. However, some of the products meant for local consumption (skins, wool, cotton, spices, etc.) were also traded to distant lands as per their demand in overseas markets. But as these goods are perishable in nature, we rarely find direct evidence of these. The yields from excavations indicate the presence of the goods belonging to the second category in maximum quantity.

The major production centres of the Tamil region in the early historical period were: Arikāṁēḍu, Aḷagankuḷam, Aḷagarai, Kāveripaṭṭiṇam, Uṛaiyūr, Tirukkāmpuliyūr, Kāñcīpuram, Kāraikāḍu and Koḍumaṇal. The archaeological finds suggest the presence of local bead-making industry at all these sites (Mahalingam 1970: 19, 50; Margabandhu 2002). However, the most noteworthy is the occurrence of 2220 carnelian beads in single burials at Koḍumaṇal, the first of its kind in India (Rajan 1996: 76, Rajan 1998). But the absence of raw materials such as carnelian and lapis lazuli, in the region suggest that these were imported from Gujrat and Afghanistan respectively. Koḍumaṇal was famous for its gemstone industry, especially beryl beads, which was in great demand by the foreign merchants as early as the 7th–8th centuries B.C. The Coimbatore region, and particularly Koḍumaṇal and its neighbouring areas were gifted with the source of semiprecious stones. The *Periplus* also refers to the beryl exported from Muziris and Nelcynda on the west coast in great quantity (Casson 1989: 85, 222; Schoff 1974: 45). So, it can be inferred that Koḍumaṇal excelled as a centre of bead-making especially of beryl and these reached the ports on the west coast through the Palghat Pass and then were exported to the Mediterranean world.

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Arikāmēḍu was another major manufacturing and marketing centre for beads of semi-precious stones and glass. The origin or the place of the manufacture of some beads, especially the blue glass beads found at Arikāmēḍu, is traced in central India/Deccan and they can be dated to the Sātavāhana period. The etched carnelian beads from Arikāmēḍu are believed to have been brought here from other parts of India. Though the exact centre of their manufacture in South India is not yet known, carnelian as raw material was probably transported from the Gujrat region. It is important to observe here that such carnelian beads were also used by the Harappans. Moreover, the majority of stones used for making beads at Arikāmēḍu are the members of the quartz family of minerals, the largest mineral group on earth. But the regions around Arikāmēḍu lacked these resources. So, these were procured from the nearest sources located along the lower reaches of the rivers Kirshna and Godavari in Andhra Pradesh (Francis Jr. 1987: 8-30). Nevertheless, Arikāmēḍu also exported beads to Rome and the countries of Southeast Asia, northeast Asia and southeast Africa during the ancient period (Ray 1994: 94-5).

The shell objects found at different sites throughout the subcontinent are another important indicator of exchange between various regions. The discovery of the articles made of marine shells at inland sites suggests the coast-hinterland links during the early historical period. Though used for various other purposes, the shells were mainly used for making bangles, ornaments and beads. Shell being a marine-product, its spread to the inland areas indicates the transfer of the raw materials and the special skills or technology used in hollowing out the shell for making bangles and ornaments.

Shell industry is one of the oldest industries as shell objects are found in many burial sites in our study area. But the literary evidence in this context is available only from the early historical period. According to Pliny, the Roman corals were highly prized in India as the Indian pearls were in Rome. His accounts suggest that the large import of corals to India caused scarcity in their centres of production (Prasad 1977: 219). The *Periplus* (Casson 1989: 22-4, 85, 87-8; Scholl 1974: 44-5) also refers to the imports of corals at the ports of Barbaricum, Barygaza (Bharuch), Muziris and Nelcynda. The text further states that pearls from Koṛkai were sold at Nelcynda, which was an emporium of foreign trade in the 1st century A.D. Though there were pearls of inferior variety in the European waters, the people of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome and China valued the Oriental pearls from the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Mannar (Arunachalam 1952: 31-2; Athiyaman 2000: 6-14).⁶

Till the beginning of the Christian Era, the Pāndyas of the *Sangam* Age, who ruled first from Koṛkai and later from Madurai, had an undisputed monopoly in fishing and the trade in pearls. But their position had changed in the beginning of the 1st century A.D., when the Cholas began to develop their own fisheries in the Palk Bay after conquering the Pāndyas and Ceylon (Arunachalam 1952: 13-28, Caldwell 1982: 7, 17-8, 26). The ancient Tamil works

such as the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, the *Śilappadikāram*, the *Ahanānūru*, the *Puraṇānūru*, the *Kalittogai*, the *Narṇinai*, the *Maṇimēkalai* and the *Muthoḷḷāyiram* mention about the inland and foreign trade of the pearls and chanks. These are also referred to in Sanskrit works like the Vedas, the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata and others (Arunachalam 1952: 20-39). The remains of bangles, beads and other objects made of shell from the sites such as Uṇaiyūr (Raman 1988:100), Tirukkāmpuliyūr (Mahalingam 1970: 19), Aḷagarai (Mahalingam 1970: 19), Kāraikāḍu (Begley et al 1992: 128-9), Perūr (IAR 1970-71: 33-4) and other sites also point towards the existence of an extensive shell industry in Early Tamiḷakam.

Glass industry in the Tamil region can be dated to the circa 3rd century B.C. on the basis of available data. The excavations have yielded glass in various stages of manufacturing. The glass objects include beads, bangles and objects of daily use like bowls, etc.

The evidence of local glass industry have been found at Kāveripattinam (Soundararajan 1994: 97ff, 106ff), Aḷagankuḷam (Kasinathan 1996: 88-92). Uṇaiyūr (Raman 1988: 19, 95-6), Tirukkāmpuliyūr (Mahalingam 1970: 52), Kāñcīpuram (Raman 1987: 69-70) and Kāraikāḍu (Begley et al 1992: 13, IAR 1966-67: 21, IAR 1987-88: 103, IAR 1988-89: 80). Recently, a systematic study and documentation of the glass objects including beads found at Arikāmēḍu by Peter Francis Jr. (1987) have revealed that the site was a major manufacturing centre for beads of various materials including glass since circa 2nd century B.C. It has been established that Arikāmēḍu was an international centre, an emporium that gathered products from different parts of the world and the subcontinent and along with its own products of export, re-exported them to different centres. Some glass objects found at Arikāmēḍu are believed to have been used by the Romans residing at the site as the excavations suggest the existence of a Roman colony/settlement at Arikāmēḍu (Suresh 1992: 83).

Terracotta or clay objects have been found at almost all the major excavated sites of Tamilnadu. The terracotta art at many places shows the influence of the other art forms of the neighbouring regions and also of the other regions of the subcontinent. Some of these yields even indicate the foreign contacts or the foreign influence (Suresh 2007: 12).

Some terracotta objects from Kāveripattinam show the Buddhist influence of the Amarāvati-Nagarjunakonda art. Terracottas figurines with same features have been found at many sites in the Deccan. The earliest terracottas of this type are dated to the circa 1st century A.D. The early levels at the sites like Tirukkāmpuliyūr, Aḷagarai and Uṇaiyūr have also yielded terracotta figures, which seem to have a common source of origin (Margabandhu 2002).

A variety of terracotta objects have been found at Kāñcīpuram (Subramanyam and Raman 1967, Raman 1987). These indicate the consistent continuity of the artistic tradition from circa 1st century A.D. Nevertheless, these also bear the characteristics similar to those found at the sites in Deccan. In this context, it is worth noting that the excavations at Kāñcīpuram have yielded the fragments of 11 terracotta coin moulds. Of these, five are

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identified as the Sātavāhana coin moulds, two are the punch-marked coin moulds, three are the Pallava coin moulds, and a coin mould of the later period whose dynastic relationship could not be ascertained (Raman and Shanmugam 1991). The presence of the Sātavāhana coin moulds in Tamilnadu indicate the manufacture and circulation of the Sātavāhana coins in the region. This further suggests the use of these coins in the economic transactions in the Tamil region. Thus, the Sātavāhana coins were locally manufactured for the local use or circulation in the northern part of the Tamil region. Though these moulds are believed to have been used as the devices to manufacture the forged or fake Sātavāhana coins, their discovery at Kāñcīpuram links the northern part of the Tamil region with the Sātavāhana Empire of the Andhra region. It also reflects the economic importance of the Sātavāhana coins in the first three centuries of the Christian era and so they were forged (Raman and Shanmugam 1991). In this process of interaction between these two regions, the art forms travelled along with the commercial waves and reached the upper (northern) regions of the Tamiḷakam.

In this connection, it should also be mentioned that some sites in the Coimbatore district have also yielded a large number of terracotta figurines, datable to the early centuries of the Christian era. Their styles of modeling too reflect the innovations in the original style of the art forms in contemporary Deccan and coastal Andhra Pradesh (Majeed 1978, Margabandhu 2002, Nagaswamy 1987, Poongunran 1978).

Some terracotta objects of foreign origin or the imitated varieties have also been found at Arikāmēḍu and Koḍumaṇal. The fragments of a Roman lamp and imitations of the Graeco-Roman type terracotta human figurines were discovered from the excavations at Arikāmēḍu. All the human figurines from Arikāmēḍu were found in the level which can be dated to the 1st century A.D. except one, which was discovered from the Pre-Arretine layer dated around the end of the 1st century B.C. Recently, a terracotta head was found at Koḍumaṇal. Unfortunately, it has not been correctly identified. It appears to be like Apollo with its spiked helmet, the moustache and the clipped beard. It is suggested to be the head of a soldier. The face is also endowed with the Graeco-Roman features as found in Gandharan art. The find is the only one of its kind in the region (Suresh 1992: 53-5). This particular find is the indicator of the Roman contact with the region. It has been established that the main land route via the Palghat gap joining the Tamil region and the west coast passed through Koḍumaṇal.

The manufacture of jewellery is also evident at some sites. The hoards at many sites also contain jewellery. However, among these finds the Graeco-Roman jewellery dominates the finds, which have their origin in other regions of the subcontinent and other countries. As mentioned earlier, the excavations at Arikāmēḍu have yielded a large number of beads and gems of foreign origin. One of the gems dated to the 1st century A.D., is a quartz *intaglio* representing a cupid and an eagle. The untrimmed nature of this gem suggests

that it was probably made locally by a Mediterranean craftsman, who was staying at this Roman settlement (Nagaswamy 1995: 67, Wheeler et al 1946, Wheeler 1976: 43ft).

A hoard found at Veḷḷalūr in Coimbatore district in 1932 contained gold jewellery along with 121 *denarii* of Augustus. The jewellery includes 4 gold finger rings. All these four items were manufactured by the Graeco-Roman artists. Two of these were locally made by the Mediterranean artists living there, while the other two were imported. Thus, the finds from the Veḷḷalūr hoard, like that from Arikāmēḍu, suggest that the Graeco-Roman artists and Indian artists were working together in the Tamil region in the 1st century A.D (Nagaswamy 1995: 67-8).

The Roman coin hoard at Karivalamvandanallūr in Tirunelvēli district also contained a few gold jewels. One of these jewels was found in the hoard with a coin of the Roman ruler Hadrian (A.D. 118) and is believed to have reached India only in the 2nd century A.D. Though the jewel exhibits non-Indian motifs, its examination by experts has established that it was made in India by the local craftsmen. A gold signet ring from Karūr found in 1991 is worth mentioning in this context. The female figure on the ring bears a resemblance to that on one of the imported rouletted potsherds found at Arikāmēḍu depicting a standing lady holding a metallic mirror. Both of these finds at Karūr and Arikāmēḍu respectively are dated to the 1st century A.D. The signet ring from Karūr depicts a pair of *mithuna* figures, probably a Chēra king and queen (Nagaswamy 1995: 56-7, 66-9). The art of engraving in *intaglio* is essentially associated with lapidary rather than the work of a goldsmith. Perhaps the Karūr ring was influenced by Graeco-Roman lapidary art brought to Tamilnādu by the Roman merchants. It is a known fact that Romans came to Vāṇiyambāḍi and Paḍiyūr, not far from Karūr, for the beryl. Gems like beryl were favoured for engraving *intaglio*. This further indicates that the Roman jewels could have certainly reached the Chēra capital at Karūr. The imitated specimen and those reflecting a synthesis of Roman and local elements attest this fact. On the other hand, the depiction of *mithuna* figures is undoubtedly influenced by Indian ethos, which seems to have derived from the Buddhist sculptural art of Amarāvati in Andhra Pradesh (Suresh 1992: 57). Thus, this evidence again shows the influence of the Deccan art on the local art of the Tamil region during the early historic period.

The evidence of textile industry at certain sites are also noteworthy. The brick structures identified as the dyeing vats at Arikāmēḍu (Wheeler et al 1946: 27) and Uṇaiyūr (Raman 1988: 21-2) indicate that these sites have been flourishing centres of textile industry. R.E.M. Wheeler (Wheeler et al 1946: 27) has dated the dyeing vats at Arikāmēḍu to the beginning of the Christian era. But V. Begley (1996), on the basis of recent excavations, has quashed Wheeler's (1946) identification of the tank like enclosed structures at Arikāmēḍu as having been the part of a textile dyeing complex. As these enclosures have no traces of paved floors or drainage outlets, nor any discoloration of the sand or soil remaining to indicate

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organic discharge, these could not have been used for dyeing of textiles. However, this is not to deny the importance of textiles as a major item of export from the Coromandel Coast to the West and that of Arikāmēdu as a production centre. But these structures, according to Begley, were probably not related to industrial production but were more likely used for the storage of industrial or agricultural products. Nevertheless, she believes that the purpose of these enclosures was related to commerce rather than identifiable domestic or residential use. In regard to Uṛaiyūr. K.V. Raman (1988: 21-2) opines that the site has been a flourishing centre of textile industry right from the *Sangam* Age. Tirukkāmpuliyūr (Mahalingam 1970: 19-20) has yielded the evidence of silk fibre. The terracotta spindle whorls used in manual spinning were found at Tirukkāmpuliyūr (Mahalingam 1970: 110) and Uṛaiyūr (Raman 1988: 104). The Tamil literary works of the contemporary period also mention the cotton fabrics of Kāveripattinam and Madurai. The *Śilappadikāram* (Naidu et al 1979: 38, 193) refers to the cloth merchants of Madurai and the weavers of Puhār (Kāveripattinam) dealing in fabrics of different kind (Prasad 1977: 207). However, merely the above mentioned archaeological finds and the literary references, are not enough to draw a clear picture as to how and to what extent textile was included in the trading commodities. From the available data in the context of South India, especially in our area of study, we may assume that the textile industry was a local one and it catered to the demand of local/regional population only. However, South India besides the other parts of India might have played the role of gathering the Chinese silk and re-exporting it to the Roman Empire where it was in high demand (Bagchi 1929: 15).

(ii) Means of Communication/Transport

Trading activities were facilitated by means of transport depending on the locations of the sites. The information on means of transport in local trade can be gleaned through the literary references. The *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 58) refers to ships loaded with goods in the Bay of Bengal. It also mentions the sailors and ships laden with varieties of products anchored at ports like Kāveripattinam ready to sail for distant lands. According to the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 75), Cheran Śenguttuvan, on his expedition to the north, crossed the Ganges in boats. It also records that the Kaveri plain was fertile and Poompuhār (Kāveripattinam) was a flourishing seaport in the *Sangam* period, which functioned as a famous emporium and received the ships laden with cargo from many lands. The *Perumpānāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 89) mentions that from Kāñcī the boat was used to ferry the sailors and merchants across the river Ganges which has its origin in the Himalayas.

The rivers formed the important lines of communication for the local trade, although they were not as big and useful for smooth navigation when compared to the north Indian rivers (Deloche 1994: 35-6, 100-1). According to the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 69) Vaigai was a broad river. The *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 62) mentions Madura

(Madurai) as a wealthy town. The *Śīrupāṇārruppadaī* (Mudhaliar 2000: 41-2) refers to the river travel in the Pennar river.

In the *Sangam* text, the *Puṇānāṇūru* refers to the ships which were used to enter into the river Kaveri without slackening its sail at Poompuhār. This suggests that the harbour was located inside the river and the river was navigable. Similar kind of arrangements might have existed for other parts too but the bigger ships were probably anchored near the shore in the sea and the goods would have been transported to land in small vessels as is done now-a-days in the minor ports of the Indian coasts. Port Dhanuskōdi near Rāmeśvaram in modern times can be cited as the best example of this kind (Athiyaman 1997: 241).

However, the available facts and assumptions are not enough to conclude about the existence of a well developed network of riverine routes. However, the literary references to small vessels like the *ampi*, *puṇai* or *piṇai*, *timil*, *ōṭam*, and *paḥri*, indicate that the traffic must have taken place through streams and lakes. (Arulraj *et al* 1988, Rajamanickam *et al* 1994: 9-18, 55-74). Their use was confined to local trade for short distances. Nevertheless, their use for the purposes other than trading activities cannot be ruled out (Verma 2005: 304-11).

‘*Ampi*’ literally means water. This word is probably derived from ‘*ampu*’ meaning water and the sea. It also means bamboo. This term occurs frequently in ancient literature but not in medieval and modern literature. Bamboo was used in making ‘*ampi*’. Perhaps small boats and ships were referred to by this name. It had side planks or logs of wood which were tied together. These were devoid of sails and masts. However, oar is associated with *ampi*. The *Śīlappadikāram* mentions three types of *ampi*—*ampi* with a horse face (*parimukavampi*), with the face of an elephant (*karilmukavampi*) and with a lion-shaped prow (*arimukavampi*). *Ampi* might have been used mainly for crossing rivers and coastal transport (Arulraj *et al* 1988, Rajamanickam *et al* 1994: 9-18, 55-74).

The name ‘*puṇai*’ is derived from the type of log used, i.e., bamboo (*puṇai*) and the mode of uniting the bamboo, i.e., tying (*piṇai*). It is identified with a catamaran (*kaṭṭumaram*) of modern times. This name comes from *kaṭṭu* meaning ‘to tie’ and *maram* meaning ‘tree’. In this the logs are tied. The *Śīlappadikāram* mentions the *puṇai* made of wood. Sails and oars are not associated with *puṇai* as described in the literary works (Arulraj *et al* 1988, Rajamanickam *et al* 1994: 11-2).

‘*Timil*’ also resembles a catamaran. We do not have any boat by the name ‘*timil*’ in modern times. The *Sangam* works mention that this was used for fishing, including pearl fishing. It had side planks but no sail (Arulraj *et al* 1988). Perhaps only ores were used for sailing (Rajamanickam *et al* 1994: 12).

‘*ōṭam*’ is derived from ‘*ōṭu*’, which means ‘to run’. So, *ōṭam* referred to the boat which runs on water (*ōṭu* + *am*). The *Ahanānūru* mentions this in association with the sea. This was used as a ferry boat (Arulraj *et al* 1988, Rajamanickam *et al* 1994: 16).

'*Pah̥ri*' is described as a wide mouthed boat in the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Arulraj et al 1988, Rajamanickam *et al* 1994: 18). There is the mention of the *pah̥ri* carrying paddy and salt.

Other types of boats, big in size with sails and masts, mentioned in the *Sangam* literature include *nāivāy* or *nāvāi*, *vaṅkam* or *vaṅgam*, *marakkalam* or *kalam*, etc. which were used for foreign trade, war and other purposes.

The land routes were scaled by the traders with the help of carriages and beasts of burden. Though the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 57, 68) mentions the exchange of the horses from Arabia for the products of the Tamil land, these mainly served the purpose of war. It also refers to the strong chariots with war-horses.

(iii) Means and Modes of Exchange

As mentioned before, the five-fold landscape of ancient Tamiḻakam had different kinds of resources, which were exchanged for internal consumption. Although, different types of exchange/distribution systems existed during the period, the internal trade of the times was mostly conducted through the barter system. There are references to those practices in the literary works and some of them have survived in South India even till today. The first type of exchange could be similar to the sharing of resources in the hunter-gatherer societies. Certain contemporary fisher groups follow this kind of resource distribution. For example, the *kaṭṭumaram* fishermen, north of Chennai, share their catch with their fellow men who do not go for fishing. The second kind of exchange was reciprocal exchange in which relatives give gifts to each other. This happens even now in the villages where people gift the garden produce to their relatives. In this the commodities are not strictly measured. The third type could be called "open barter", where commodities are measured and exchanged. The fourth type of exchange or distribution of resources were at the levels of chiefs and *vēntars* who redistributed their resources acquired as tributes or spoils of the wars to their patrons and bards, and received name and fame in return (Selvakumar 2007 & 2008, Singaravelu 2001: 46-50).

However, most of the traders in the early historic period followed the barter system of exchange as evident in the *Sangam* texts. The merchants exchanged their goods with other articles of their need. There are several references to paddy and salt serving as measures of value. The hawkers sold the paddy equivalent in value for salt (Champakalakshmi 2006: 102-3, Pillay 1975: 239-40). The most sought after was the different kinds of wares of the countryside with which, loaded in their carts, the merchants returned to their respective places (Arokiaswami 1972: 82). Nevertheless, due to regional disparity the products of one region were also exchanged with those of another. For example, the *Perumpāṇāṟruppadai* (Raghunathan 1997: 79) mentions exchange of buttermilk for buffaloes and black calves. Likewise, the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Raghunathan 1997: 58) records that curd was exchanged for paddy. Similarly, honey and roots might have

been exchanged for fish-oil and toddy, and sugarcane and *aval* (rice-flakes) for venison and arrack, while in Muziris, fish was sold for paddy (Sastri 2007: 128).

Here, it would be important to note that the coins, especially Roman, were an important item of import. Moreover, their high value is attested by the minting of imitated coins found at many sites. But these were used in the external trade and not for the local exchange. The antiquities in the form of terracotta weights in circular and square shapes unearthed from different sites suggest an idea of the weight standard used in the early historic Coromandel region. Terracotta seals found at some sites indicate that the merchant guilds used those seals for stamping their goods for safety and easy identification. Though the coin moulds found at some sites reflect that coins minted locally helped to facilitate the exchange at local level, a well-established and controlled system of coinage in the early Tamiḻakam is doubtful. These indigenous coins in use during the *Sangam* period included *kāśu*, *kāṇam*, and some punch-marked coins of gold. The *kāśu* made of gold as well as unminted solid gold were gifted to poets, *Brahmins* and *Pāṇar*. For instance, Uruttiran Kaṇṇanār, the author of *Paṭṭinappālai* was awarded 1600 gold *kāśu*. The discovery of a hoard of *kāśus* inscribed with the words—‘*Tinnan Yetirān Sēndal Ā*’ reveals interesting facts. These are identified as the coins issued by Sendan who encountered Tinnan. On the basis of the script inscribed on these coins, these are dated to the 2nd century A.D. However, the term ‘*Palinga Kāśu*’ in the *Ahanānūru* suggests that some material other than gold was also used for the manufacture of coins. Although, it is difficult to determine the kind of material used, its name indicates that it was perhaps shaped out of glass beads or *cowrie* shells (Pillay 1975: 245-6).

Kāṇam was another gold coin in use but like *kāśu* it also denoted gold in general. These coins were regular in shape. Although these are devoid of the figures of kings, they contain the depictions of the tigers and the elephants. Some punch-marked coins of gold very similar to the *purāṇa* or *dhāraṇa* punch-marked silver coins of North India have also been found (Pillay 1975: 245).⁷

Through his investigations, K. G. Krishanan (1991) has shown the presence of mints in Tamilnadu at least from the 3rd century B.C. Archaeological finds also show that different types of coins were issued by the Pāndyas, Chēras and Cholas of the *Sangam* age. The Pāndyas issued the punch-marked coins which were half the weight of the Mauryan punch-marked coins. A big hoard of these coins was found at Boḍināyakunūra near Madurai. These coins bear five symbols. The first two symbols—sun and the six-armed symbol are similar to those in the Mauryan coins. The other three newly introduced ones were – a representation of *stūpa*-like structure, a leafy tree, and trident-battle-axe-in-railing. The reverse of these coins contain a big fish symbol, which is taken to be a Pāndyan symbol. The Pāndyan coins are both uninscribed and inscribed and are of two types. On one we find a horse facing left before a post and on the other is an elephant facing right.

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Both types of these coins have the fish symbol on the reverse. The inscribed coins with depiction of a horse bear an inscription, which is read as *Paruvāluthi*. It is important to note that several rulers with this name are referred to in the *Sangam* works. However, it is not known which of them issued these coins. The inscribed coins with depiction of elephant carry the letters *pa ma ka na* interspersed with symbols. The derivation of these letters is not certain although some scholars believe that it referred to *Pāndya Māranakoṇa* (Brown 2009: 50, Gupta 2004: 21-2, 53-4). A silver punch-marked coin has also been discovered at Aḷagankuḷam in Rāmanāthapuram district but its date is not certain (Kasinathan 1996, Majeed 1992, Nagaswamy 1991). The excavations at Koḍumaṇal in Erode district have also yielded two punch-marked coins dated to the 1st-2nd centuries A.D. (Rajan 1994: 54-5, Rajan 1996).

The Chēras and the Chōlas during the *Sangam* epoch issued die-struck uninscribed and inscribed square copper coins. The reverse of the Chēra coins bear the bow and arrow symbol, the emblem of the Chēras. On the other side of the coins is an elephant. The inscribed coins refer to a name placed above the elephant, which has been deciphered as *kōliporian*, *kōliporian yatan*, and *imporai*. However, the identification of the issuers is difficult even with these names. Besides these copper coins, we also find a small silver coin with a blank reverse. This unique coin bears the clean-shaven head of a king facing right. It is probable that the idea of a portrait on the coin was influenced by the features of the Roman coins. All these coins are dated to the period between *circa* 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D. (Rajan 1994: 54-5). Recently, inscribed silver coins of Mākkōtai (identified as a Chēra chieftain) and Kuṭṭuvan Kōtai (identified as a Chēra ruler) were found at Karūr. These are dated to around the 3rd century A.D. (Krishnamurthy 1992, Nagaswamy 1995: 12-8).

The dynastic coins of the early Cholas have been found from the excavations at Kāveripattinam in the Taṇjavūr district (Raman 1968: 239). These are square in shape and of different sizes. The reverse of these coins bear the depiction of a standing tiger with its tail upraised, i.e., the emblem of the Cholas. On a few of these coins an elephant is seen on the other side. Most of the symbols on the reverse are similar to the ones found on the early die-struck coins of North India. No inscribed early Chola coin has been discovered so far. Some such coins have been found in the Cuddalore district (earlier South Arcot district) with depiction of a horse on one side and a zig-zag line probably symbolizing a river on the other side. These carry the legend *Malaimān* written in Tamiḻ-Brāhmi. However, these were probably issued by the Pāndyas (Ramachadran 1980: 120-6).

The barter system certainly dominated the modes of exchange at local level. However, the ancient Tamils also used the balances for measurement or weighing of the commodities even for the exchange through barter. However, this was used in the large transactions in markets. This is evident from the reference to the term *kōl* (1 *kōl* = 30 inches) for the

balance rod in the literary works. The balance was called *tulākkōl*, since the commodities were weighed against the standard weight *tulām* (Sanskrit word '*tulām*' means 'balance'). The *Śilappadikāram* (Naidu et al 1979: 28, 193) mentions about the measuring rods and yard sticks. The term *kā* used in the texts denoted a rod with wooden pans suspended at both the sides. The rich merchants and goldsmiths probably used the yard scale made of steel and ivory. The measures used by the ancient Tamils were *urai*, *nāḷi* and *mā* (Pillay 1975: 245, Subramanian 1988: 87).

(iv) Markets/Marts/Bazaars

The *Sangam* works also mention the places of exchange such as the *bazaars* or markets in villages and more particularly in the towns. These were called *Angāḍl*. There existed *Allangāḍi* (evening or night markets) as distinguished from *Nāḷangāḍi* (day markets) (Mudaliar 2000: 70, Naidu et al 1979: 40). The market places are also referred to as *Āvaṇam* in the *Paṭṭinappālai* (Pillay 1975: 242-4). The word *Kaḍai* has also been used for the *bazaar* in ancient Tamil literature. This refers to the *bazaars* and stalls located in the front of houses and hence were called *Kaḍai* or a place near the entrance gateway. In course of time the term *Kaḍai* came to be associated more with the stall itself than with the place where the stall was originally located. So, the word came to signify a *bazaar* wherever located (Ayyar 1987: 130-2, Mudaliar 2000: 70, 72, 76). The *Maduraikāñcī* refers to the *bazaar* streets of the Pāndyan capital Madurai which were crowded with the traders and artisans of various crafts. There is also the mention of an evening *bazaar* at Madurai. The marts at Kāñcī, where the buying and selling of goods took place, are also referred to in the *Perumpāṇāṟruppādai* (Raghunathan 1997: 88-9). The *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 13, 25) describes about the *bazaar* of the city Kāveripattinam. Goods for sale were heaped in the *bazaar* at places particularly marked for each and each shop was designated by a particular flag very much as inns and taverns are indicated in the West by designs of animal figures (Arokiaswami 1972: 81, Naidu et al 1979: 44). Besides the designated shops in the market places, the hawkers also went for door to door selling of different items such as flowers as portrayed in the *Maduraikāñcī* (Mudaliar 2000: 71-2). The foreign merchants (*Yavanas*) visited these *bazaars* for transacting business. The interpreters and brokers helped them in their transactions (Pillay 1975: 243-4).

Maruvūrppākkam was a distinct part of Kāveripattinam near which the *bazaar* was located. There were streets nearby where the traders and craftsmen dealing with different products resided (Ayyar 1987: xxi-xxii, Naidu et al 1979: 37-9).⁸ From the descriptions in contemporary works, it appears that the *bazaars* of Madurai were bigger in size and also in terms of volume transacted than those of Kāveripattinam. Different streets in the *bazaars* were meant for the sale of different products. For example, there were streets dealing in diamonds, rubies and pearls, and those where dress, corn and other articles of everyday use were sold (Pillay 1975: 244).

(iv) Traders/Merchants

The trade during the early historical period was predominantly a private enterprise. This is evident from the fact that there was the lack of an elaborate bureaucratic infrastructure to monitor and control trade during the reign of the rulers of the period (Ray 1986: 179-80). In the Tamil region, the *paravadar* or the inhabitants of the coastal tract shifted from their traditional occupation of salt-making and fishing into long distance trade. The Tamiḻ-Brāhmi inscriptions from Madurai region refer to the term *nikama*, meaning *nigama* or exchange centre. Corroborating different kinds of evidence viz., archaeological and literary, it is observed that in the early historical periods the merchants of Tamiḻakam were generally organised in powerful guilds and corporations, which transcended political divisions, and were, therefore not much affected by the wars and changes of the times. The merchant community generally lived in towns.

The *Sangam* texts refer to the name *Cheṭṭi*, who collectively form a commercial community in Tamiḻakam. This name occurs in two epics – the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkalai*. However, this term occurs for the first time in the *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhavia 2000: 44) where a *Cheṭṭi* named Chandradaṭṭan is said to have owned a merchant craft or vessel.

The caste⁹ named ‘Cheṭṭi’ applied to the merchant class is probably derived from the Sanskrit work ‘*Śrēṣṭhi*’ vice versa. According to K.K. Pillay (1975), ‘*Śrēṣṭhi*’ had little to do with ‘Cheṭṭi’. It is important to note that the term ‘Cheṭṭi’ occurs for the first time in the *Maṇimēkalai* (Aiyangar 1924: 83, Madhavia 2000: 14). It might have, otherwise, emerged from the Tamil word *cheṭṭu* meaning trade, as is shown from the fact that the *Cheṭṭiyār* community is described in the registered documents even today as belonging to the *cheṭṭu* caste (Pillay 1975: 247-8, Thurston 1909: 91-2). The *Cheṭṭis* were divided on the basis of the nature of trade they carried. For example, the *puvathukuḍi Cheṭṭis* were one among those who received their name from a village in Taṇjavūr district. They were mostly petty traders and money lenders much concerned with the internal trade. However, the *Cheṭṭis* played a significant role in the foreign trade during the *Sangam* period and are portrayed as wealthy merchants owning big ocean-going vessels. The rulers imported fine breed of horses from foreign countries for the use in their cavalry. The inscriptions of later periods refer to the class of ‘*kudirai Cheṭṭis*’ who were engaged in horse trade (Jayasurya 1980: 63). ‘*Eṭṭi*’ was another title apparently derived from ‘*Cheṭṭis*’ conferred on a distinguished merchant (Madhavia 2000: 62, Naidu *et al* 1979: 207-9). This term too notably occurs in the epics. The term ‘*Eṭṭikumāran*’ referred to the son of a *Cheṭṭi* (Madhavia 2000: 14). ‘*Eṭṭipū*’ was another honour conferred on merchants.

The trading class was a separate entity and had many sub-divisions based on the nature of the articles they traded. They can be well observed in the name *Kūlavāṇigan Śāttanār*,

who was the author of the *Maṇimēkalai*. The title ‘*Śāttanār*’ literally means the food grain merchant. *Ḥavēṭṭanār*, another poet of the times, is designated as *Aṟuvaivāṇigar* and many other names with like caste-names occur in contemporary literature (Arokiaswami 1972: 81-2).

It is doubtful if there was a clear cut *Vaiśya* caste in the early period, though Tolkappiyar mentions the *Vaiśyar* (Pillay 1975: 247). The *Maṇimēkalai* (Madhaviah 2000: 2) mentions a rich merchant of *Vaiśya* caste by name Mesathuvan (father of *Kōvalan*). No other *Sangam* works takes note of this. The term ‘*Vāṇigar*’ denoting the merchants appears in the *Maṇimēkalai* and other *Sangam* works. The scholars have attempted to show that the terms ‘*Vāṇigan*’ and ‘*Vāṇkan*’ originated from the Sanskrit word ‘*Pāṇis*’ who were the *Dasyu* or Tamil traders of the Vedic times. It has been concluded that ‘*Pāṇis*’ and its variants and derivations must have passed to north India from the south. Hence, ‘*Vāṅga*’ became ‘*Bāṇiga*’ and ‘*Pāṇi*’. But the hypothesis on which this view has been advanced is tentative. A few of the poets of the *Sangam* age belonged to this class of merchants. Some of them included Madurai *Aṟuvai Vāṇigan Ḥavēṭṭanār*, Madurai *Kūavāṇigan Śittalai Śāttanār*, *Kāvēripūmpattinattu Ponvāṇiganār Makanār Napūdanār*, *Bēri Śāttanār*, *Uṟaiyūr Ḥampon Vāṇiganār* and Madurai *Ōlaikkaḍaik Kaṇṇam Pukundārāyattanār* (Aiyangar 1924: 80, Pillay 1975: 243, 247-8). Their names clearly indicate their association with different places.

An important question that arises before us in this context is that whether the trading profession had become hereditary among the Tamils of the *Sangam* age? The literary references show that even in the early *Sangam* phase this was not followed in a rigid manner. For example, the *umaṇar*, the salt-sellers, did not belong to the *paradavar* group alone in the beginning. The *paradavar* were the inhabitants of the littoral region whose main occupation was fishing. Some *paradavar* engaged themselves in the trading of salt and came to be called as *umaṇar*. The bulk of the sailors also must have been recruited from this community on account of their attachment with the sea. Many from the group were occupied in pearl fishing. It is interesting to note that, besides the *paradavar*, some *pāṇar*, who were engaged in the fine arts of music and dance, also took to fishing. Apparently, a group of *pāṇar* belonged to the *paradavar* community. Similarly, *Kāvēripūmpattinam Vāṇiganār*, the father of *Nappūdanār*, the author of the *Mullaippāṭṭu*, belonged to the group of the *Pon Vāṇiganār* (goldsmith). Thus, probably there was certain degree of freedom in the matter of occupational distribution among the various sections of the population. The hereditary basis would have evolved with the passage of time. Generally, the persons engaged with certain occupations such as fishermen, coppersmiths, goldsmiths and agriculturists themselves offered their product for sale. Besides these, there were certain traders in particular commodities like the *Kūlavāṇigam*, *Aṟuvaivāṇigan* and the dealers in palm leaves (Pillay 1975: 89, 246-7).

CONCLUSION

The archaeological antiquities and the literary references indicate that the local trade networks in early Tamilakam primarily facilitated to satisfy the local needs. However, this observation is not to undermine the fact that some of the inland and almost all of the coastal sites also played important roles in the foreign trade. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the foreign exchange mainly involved the transfer of exotic goods which had enough demand. The uneven geographical features of the Tamil region made the thriving local trading activities imperative.

The exchanged commodities at local level included mostly the items of daily needs. The examinations of the artifacts discovered at several sites suggest that there flourished various crafts in early Tamilakam. Though these were specialized traders for different articles, the vocations were not hereditary in initial stages. Moreover, in many cases we find that a community of traders concerned with the trading of a particular commodity also engaged in the business of other goods at times. The guilds of traders were formed to safeguard their interests. Due to the lack of the proper coinage system in the region, barter system played the dominant role in exchange process.

Rajan Gurukkal (1990, 2010: 124-30), however, overemphasizes plunder raids as the chief resource base of the *Sangam* economy. In his opinion, the *Sangam* society had to maintain plunder raids as an economy activity and the transmarine commerce of the period did not have any lasting impact on the contemporary social formation. He also says that the dealers of Tamilakam do not seem to have any crucial role in the Roman trade. This, according to him, was because the system of production and distribution was submerged in the nexus of class-kin ties. But this hypothesis needs drastic revision in the light of recent archaeological discoveries. Recent explorations and excavations at various sites have yielded evidence, which suggests the existence of significant trading contacts at local level as well as between the Tamil region, Mediterranean, Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka in the early historical period. Moreover, applying Jacques Derrida's (1981) theory of Deconstruction it may be argued that even the references in the *Sangam* literature do not depict a stereotyped model of polity, society and economy but many layers of life. A very close observations and analysis would indicate that these works tend to reveal the existence of a state, a society and a regulated economic system with its internal and external trade as early as the 3rd century B. C. Thus, undermining the role of trade, either local or foreign, and the process of urbanisation in early Tamilakam is not convincing.

The analysis of the trade mechanism reveals that trade was not limited to the purely simple forms of transaction of primitive societies, such as barter, nor did it extend to the highly developed market system of modern societies. Different social groups were involved in the transaction process which constituted the trade.

The trade routes not only helped in the local and long-distance exchange but also functioned as routes for the movement of population (pilgrims, families, etc.) and armies. Thus, some local or regional routes formed a part of the national highways connecting different regions of the Indian subcontinent. Though there are several references to different types of boats or vessels in contemporary literature, the present state of research reflects that the riverine trade routes in Tamil region were not well developed in early historical period. Trade, nevertheless, had been the most dominant and crucial factor in the urban growth of early Tamilakam. Scholars like R. Champakalakshmi (2006: 15-6) opine that this early urbanism in Tamilakam was not the result of the forces of an inner growth but was of a secondary generation induced by inter-regional trade, mainly coastal, between the Ganges plains, Andhra and Tamil regions and overland between the Deccan and the Tamil region. However, Champakalakshmi overemphasizes on the role of the maritime commerce between South India and the Mediterranean west and subsequently with Southeast Asia in the emergence and growth of urbanism in the Tamil region. She also assigns the withdrawal of the external stimuli, i.e. maritime trade as the most significant factor for the decline of this phase of urbanism in the region. But contrary to this, the recent archaeological finds do not attest the decline of trade or the urban decay in ancient Tamilakam. The remains in the context of maritime trade of Tamilakam with different regions shows that after the discovery of Monsoon and for obtaining spices from Southeast Asia to full-ill its increasing demands by the Romans combined with other factors, the focus of the maritime trade shifted from the west Coast to the east Coast in the early centuries of the Christian era. While the Indo-Roman trade was declining gradually, there was marked increase in the frequency and volume of trade with Southeast Asia. As a result of this change in the trend, certain inland centres and coastal ports showed the signs of decline while new centres emerged. Moreover, there also existed some earlier centres which continued even till later periods (Verma 2007). The vibrant network of the internal exchange or distribution systems contributed to the changes significantly and the economic activities in the region accelerated the process of urbanisation. Even in the absence of well developed coinage system., the dynastic coins discovered from various sites suggests about their circulation at the local level. This reflects the intrinsic transformations in early Tamilakam. Nevertheless, the long distance trade acted as a catalytic agent of urbanization (Subramanian 1982). Thus, the forces of the growth came from within. Further researches in this direction will possibly reveal the unknown facts in the hitherto known ancient past of Tamilakam.

Endnotes

1. Ancient Tamilakam covered the areas which are today included in the states of Tamilnadu and Kerala. However, this paper focuses upon the issue considered with special reference to the sites of Tamilnadu.

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2. Kauṭilya mentions different classes of roads—1) a. *Rājamarga* or the king's way, highway, b. the provincial roads connecting different parts of a province with its headquarters, c. roads leading to *Drōnamukha*, d. chariot roads, and e. roads leading to pasture grounds. 2) roads leading to *Śayonia*(?), military stations, burial or cremation grounds. 3) roads to gardens, groves and forests, 4) roads leading to elephant forests. It is important to note that the *Śayonia* or *Śamyaniya-patha* led to the market towns. The roads in the city were named as *Rājamarga* (King's highway), *Rāthamarga* (Chariot road), *Apānamarga* (Market road), etc. See R. B. Kangle tr. 1986. *The Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra*, Part II, (2nd ed., rpt.), Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, pp. 355-6 (Book VII, Chaps. X, XII), 399 (Book VIII, Chap. IV, Section 132), 434 (Book X, Chap. I, Section 147); R. Shamasastri tr. 1967. *Kautilya's Arthasāstra*, 8th ed. (1st ed. 1915), Mysore Printing and Publishing House, Mysore, pp. 53 (Book 11, Chap. IV), 331-2 (Book VII, Chap. XII), 397 (Book X, Chap. I); Haripada Chakraborti, 1966. *Trade and Commerce of Ancient India (C. 200 B.C. – C. 650 A.D.)*, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, pp. 23, 29-30; Moti Chandra, 1977. *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, pp. 154, 157; Also see Prakash Charan Prasad, 1977. *Foreign Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, p. 108.
3. 'Kottaimedu: The First Urban Center on Arikamedu Overland Trade', pp. 1-6. The author referred to this article at the French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry in June 2002. Though this article was catalogued in October, 1995, the name of the journal/periodical was missing. However, P. Ravitchandirane mentions about a personal letter from a historian abroad in 1994. So, the probable date for the publication should be earlier than 1994.
4. Teak was the main article of export. H. G. Rawlinson also confirms the discovery of a piece of Indian teak from the ruins of the city of Mugheir (3000 B.C.) built by Urea, the Babylonian King. See T. K. Venkata Subramanian, *Environment and Urbanisation in Early Tamilakam*, Tarnil University, Thanjavur, 1988, p. 30.
5. Monica L. Smith, through her archaeological fieldwork consisting of systematic survey at the Early Historic sites of Kaundinyapura (in Maharashtra) and Sisupalgarh (in Orissa), has shown the various roles played by the exchange networks at the local and regional levels in the Early Historic period. For details see Monica L. Smith, 'Systematic Surface Survey at the Early Historic Site of Kaundinyapura, India', *Man and Environment*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, 2000, pp. 75-87; Monica L. Smith, *The Archaeology of an Early Historic Town in Central India*, BAR International Series, Oxford, 2001; Monica L. Smith, 'The Role of Local Trade Networks in the Indian Subcontinent during the Early Historic Period', *Man and Environment*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, 2002, pp. 139-51.
6. The largest producer of the Oriental pearls till the beginning of the 20th century was the Gulf of Mannar, both the Ceylonese and the Indian side of the Gulf. See S. Arunachalam, *The History of Pearl Fishery of the Tamil Coast*, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1952, pp. 31-2; Also see N. Athiyaman, *Pearl and Chank Diving of South Indian Coast (A Historical and Ethnographical Study)*, Tamil University, Taffijavar, 2000, pp. 6-14.
7. For details about the *purāṇa* or *dhāraṇa* coins, see C.J. Brown, *The Coins of India*, Revised ed. (1st ed. 1922), Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 2009, p. 3.

8. Paṭṭinappākkam was the other portion of the city where the palace of the king was located and this part was connected by the main highway. For details see S. Shankar Raju Naidu and S. N. Ganesan tr., 1979, *Chilappadhikaram, Adi Tamil Mahakavya of Ilango Adikal* (Hindi), University of Madras, Madras, pp. 37-9 (*Puhar Kand: V*); For details also see C. P. Venkatarama Ayyar, 1987, *Town Planning in Early South India (With an introduction by Patrick Geddes and New introduction by T K Venkatasubramanian)*, Reprint (1st Pub., *Town Planning in Ancient Dekkan, Madras*, 1916), Mittal Publications, Delhi, pp. xxi-xxii, 83-6; K. K. Pillay, 1975, *A Social History of the Tamils*, Vol. I (2nd ed.), Madras University Historical Series No.- 25, University of Madras, Madras, p. 244.
9. The concept of caste system appears at several places in *Sangam* works. These mention *Pārppār*, *Andanar* or *Maṛayōr* (*Brāhmins*), *Aṛacar* (Kings or *Kṣatriyas*), *Vāṇikar/Vāṇigar* (Merchants or *Vaiśya*), and *Vellālar* (Cultivators or *Śūdra*). Only in the case of the *Vāṇikar* and *Vellālar* did their commentators like Nachchinārkkiniyar find some difficulty in fitting in the Āryan concept to the Dravidian society. This is due to the fact that the merchants were not strong or numerous enough to be mentioned as a caste and cultivators were not depressed enough to be classed as the *Śūdras* of North India. In the areas outside the Āryan habitation, the spread of the four caste system was a by product of the settlements of the Āryan *Brāhmins* and their ideological-political influence. Therefore, *Sangam* literature contains numerous Sanskrit words, references to *yajña* (sacrifices) and Āryan deities along with the idea of the caste system. The *Tolkāppiyam*, while referring to sections of population, clearly mentions the idea of upper caste and lower caste. This shows that a firm alliance between the Dravidian chieftains and their *Brāhmins* preceptors was established at least by the 5th century A.D. The performance of *yajña* by certain kings was for the recognition of their *Kṣatriya* status by the *Brāhmins* in order to reshape Dravidian society according to their choice. The formation of the two upper castes further led to the placement of the *Vāṇikar* and *Vellālar* to the third and fourth position respectively. This classification reminds us of the notions of *varṇa* system in North India. However, in the context of *Sangam* society, we do not find the use of the term *Śūdra*. It appears that the *Vellālar* who corresponds to *Śūdras* were not menial servants of the three upper groups because they were Cultivators in their own right with landownership and were permitted to carry weapons and ornaments while in king's service. The lowest social strata entrusted with menial work rather included the outcastes who were deprived of all privileges. This marked a departure from the contemporary system of the *varṇa* in the North, where the *Śūdras* had already been reduced to the menial servants of the upper classes during the Gupta period. The *Tolkāppiyam* clearly reflects the formation of a class society and class ideology, for which the castes rules were ideally suitable in slightly modified form, towards the close of the *Sangam* period. This is important to note that the Āryan pattern was not entirely imposed on *Sangam* society. For example, the *Brāhmins* were present in Tamil culture but all the *Brāhmins* were not Āryans. A gradual incorporation of certain sections of Tamil society resulted in the final formation of this group. However, the *Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśyas* were not organized on a clear-cut basis. And, the rest who constituted the majority were erroneously described by the commentators of the *Tolkāppiyam* as *Vellālar*, equating them with the *Śūdras* of the Āryan classification. But a large number

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of sub-castes had emerged before the advent of the Āryans and this process has continued through the ages. In other words, the Āryan system was based largely on *varṇa* whereas the Draviḍian pattern was primarily based on occupations. There was gradual combination of both with the passage of time. This conglomeration led to the development of caste system with its ever-increasing sub-castes. The references in literary works suggest that the caste or the occupational division had already become hereditary in the *Sangam* age. Although a large extent of flexibility existed in the *Sangam* period, the rigidity of the hereditary basis deepened in later times. Social distinction is evident from the reference to people of low-born castes in early *Sangam* works. The situation aggravated gradually when untouchability and inapproachability appeared even among certain sections of the *Śūdras*. For example, the *Śilappadikāram* mentions the instance of the goldsmith walking at a distance from that part of the street where people of higher castes, including Kōvalan, the Vaiśya, were walking.

For details see S. Shankar Raju Naidu and S. N. Ganesan tr. *Chilappadiharam, Adi Tamil Mahakavya of Ilango Adihal* (Hindi), 1979, p. 219 (*Madurai Kand: XVI*); Also see K. K. Pillay, *A Social History of the Tamils*, Vol. 1 (2nd ed.), Madras University Historical Series – No. 25, University of Madras, 1975, pp. 236-8; K. A. N. Sastri, *A History of South India, From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vyayanagar (With a new introduction by R. Champakalakshmi)*, 4th ed. (1st Pub., 1955), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 10-11; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Foundation of South Indian Society and Culture*, Bhartiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 1994, pp. 42, 148-60, 157- 8.

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Perhaps the Earliest Bronze Image of Viṣṇu Holding a Lotus

GOURISWAR BHATTACHARYA

The Museum of Indian Art, Berlin (now the Museum of Asian Art) possesses a unique bronze figure (partially damaged) of three-headed and four-armed Viṣṇu from the Swat valley of Pakistan (Plate 1). The image has been dated by the authors of the catalogue in the beginning of the seventh century CE.¹ This well-known bronze has been published in various catalogues of the Museum and also in the catalogue of the large exhibition entitled, *Palast der Gotter*, in 1992. And finally it was published in Kat. Nr. 287 of the monumental exhibition of the Gandhara sculptures held in Berlin from 9th April to August 10, 2009. The large catalogue in German runs as *Gandhara Das Buddhistische Erbe Pakistans—Legenden, Klöster und Paradiese* (the catalogue also appeared in English version).

But we are surprised to see that the author of this item gives the findspot as North Pakistan and dates it in the 5th-6th century CE—a date much earlier than the Berlin Museum date! The bronze image measures 48.5 cm in height and accession number is MIK I24. The very special feature of the lion-boar headed Viṣṇu image is that it holds a full-blown lotus with the stalk in its upper right hand². For our special interest however, is the lotus emblem of the deity. Although the later *Purāṇas* and the *Hayaśiṛṣapañcarātra* mention lotus (*padma*) as the fourth emblem of Viṣṇu together with conch (*śaṅkha*), disc (*cakra*) and mace (*gadā*), and thereby by permutation and combination formulate twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu (Haue 1992:51). But in the so-far known earliest iconographic text *Bṛhatsaūhitā* (61th century CE) however, lotus as an attribute of Vāsudeva from Mathura dated c. 300 CE now in the Museum of Asian Art (formerly Museum of Asian Art Berlin), MIK I5878 (Plate 2). The 28.5 cm tall four-armed image shows the following emblems clock-wise (*pradakṣinaū*): *varada-mudrā gadā, cakra* and *śaṅkha* (Härtel und Lobo 1984). We don't know definitely since when actually stone images of Viṣṇu are shown with a lotus emblem. Perhaps it was the Kashmir valley region where Viṣṇu with lion and boar heads (*Vaikunṭha?*) was shown with a lotus in the upper right hand and *śaṅkha* in the upper left hand, the lower right and the lower left arms are missing (See Sindmak 1989:53, fig. 20) (Plate 3). The image is dated in the mid-eighth century and is now preserved in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar (Fisher 1989:110, fig. 7, Sindmak 1989:41-56).³

While *Bṛhatsaūhitā* (c. 6th century CE) does not mention *padma* or lotus as an emblem of Vasudeva/Viṣṇu, *Viṣṇudharmottara* (c. 7th century CE) prescribes it, for example, VD, III, ch. 106, v. 10b, *utphulla-cāru-kamala-virājita-kar-āmbuja*, i.e. oh, whose lotus-like hand (is) decorated with full-blown, beautiful lotus. But VD, III, ch. 44 while describing the four-headed and eight-armed Viṣṇu does not mention *padma* as an emblem

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of the deity (vv. 12b-13a). Also ch. 47 does not mention *padma* as Vāsudeva's emblem, while ch. 60 describes Viṣṇu as two-armed holding *gadā* and *cakra*.

In the very interesting, recent researches made at an important Hindu site called Kashmir Smast (lit. Kshmir Cave), located at a distance of 50 km northeast of Makdan in Pakistan (Khan 2001:218-309), a three-headed and four-armed inscribed bronze image of Vaikuṇṭha-Viṣṇu called *Nārāyaṇa* in the pedestal inscription was found (Plate 4). This image holds a full-blown lotus (*padma*) in the upper right hand, a conch (*śaṅkha*) in the upper left hand, the lower right hand rests on the disc (*cakra*) of the personified Cakra-puruṣa and the lower left hand is about to touch the knob of the mace (*gadā*) of the personified Gadā-devī. Vaikuṇṭha-Viṣṇu (here called *Nārāyaṇa*) with lion-head on the right shoulder and boar-head on the left shoulder stands in *samapāda* position on a flat object placed on the pedestal. Also Cakra-puruṣa and Gadā-devī stand each on a flat object, which perhaps stands for a lotus. Vaikuṇṭha seems to have moustache (also compare the Berlin Museum bronze image) with large open eyes. He wears *kuṇḍala* on each ear and a crown on his head. He wears two necklaces but no *upavīta* (same is the case with the Berlin Museum image. It is quite interesting to note that no *upavīta* was given to the deity even in the 6th–7th century in the area concerned. Perhaps in the mid-ninth century *upavīta* was given to Viṣṇu in the Kashmir valley). Nevertheless a large *vanamālā* hangs down from his shoulders. It appears that there is a *śrīvatsa* mark engraved over his chest. The deity wears bangles and armlets. His lower garment with folding marks is tied with a girdle and a sash. On the inscribed pedestal in the middle of the earth-goddess is shown coming out of the pericarp of a flower (lotus?) with outstretched arms (Plate 5). The image has been published by Doris Meth Srinivasan with Lore Sander (Srinivasan and Sander 1977:105 70). Srinivasan however, describes the image (p. 107) as Fig. I—Para Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa, 427 CE Himachal Pradesh, Private Collection.

The inscription written in pointed Brāhmī script of the Gupta period is dated. Lore Sander who deciphered and discussed the inscription translates (Srinivasan and Sander 1997:114):

In the year three, in the month of Āṣāḍha, on the fifth day. on this day the image of Nārāyaṇa was installed at Bhīmāsthāna in (or at) Gharatṭamatṭha of the honourable (*śrī*) Vai(ḥ)likā. It is a religious gift of ...the honourable (*śrī*) Variṣā.

As to the date of the record, Lore Sander comments (p. 124):

As to the Saptarṣi era its date can be, calculated as follows:

$$\text{Year } 3 + [4]00 + 24 = 427 \text{ A.D. ...}$$

According to this date the *Nārāyaṇa* image was installed at Bhīmāsthāna in (or at) the Gharatṭamatṭha of the honourable Vai(ḥ)likā at the 15th or 31st May or the 30th of June 427 A.D. respectively, this means in the golden age of the Gupta empire under Kumāragupta I

Harry Falk who also deciphered and translated the above inscription read the date as thirty-three, translates (Falk 2008:140):

In the year thirty-three, in the rainy season, on the fifth day of month Āṣāḍha, on this day this statue of Nārāyaṇa was installed at the holy place of Bhīmā in the Mill-maṭha by the honourable (lady named) Vailikā as a religious gift.

We agree with the reading of date thirty-three (*trayo-trśe*) of Harry Falk and not simply *trayo* of Lore Sander. This reading can be checked from the photograph given by Srinivasan and Sander 1997, fig. 2, p. 110.

Now this dated bronze image of Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa) seems to be earliest known bronze image of the deity holding a lotus.

The Swat valley bronze image (now in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, MIK I 24), mentioned at the beginning is perhaps later.

Notes

1. Katalog: Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin 1971. In this catalogue however, the findspot of the object is given as Kaśmir and the date as middle of the 7th century AD. See item Nr. 100, illustration Nr. 23. In the catalogue of the Museum dated 1976 the findspot is given as Swat valley, Pakistan and in the catalogue dated 1986 the date has been changed to the beginning of the 7th century AD. These changes have been followed in the subsequent publications.
2. For a detailed description of the image see, Katalog 1971 Ausgestellte Werke: Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin, Kat Nr. 100 etc.
3. The same sculpture has been dated in the *mid-ninth* century by Fisher (Fisher 1989).

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Fig. 1 MIK I 24 Katalog 1971 ill. 23



Fig. 2 MIK I 5878 Härtel-Lobo 1984, no. 21



Fig. 3 Siudmak 1989, Fig. 20



Fig. 4 Srinivasan-Sander 1997, Fig. 1



Fig. 5 Srinivasan-Sander 1997, Fig. 2

A Fresh Assessment of the Coins of Vainyagupta

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Vainyagupta is introduced in history with the title 'Dvādaśāditya' on the basis of some coins. This existing idea about Vainyagupta needs to be revised with the light of a new material. Hence, first I would like to draw the scholars' attention about this new material. It is an unpublished copper plate which had been discovered in 1980 from the village Ramashil-Pirerbadi under the Kotalipada Police Station in Faridpur District (now Gopalganj). Now the plate has been preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum. [Recently I have deciphered the plate and delivered a lecture on it in 14 July 2010, organized by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.] The character of the scripts and the writing style of the plate have much similarity with the other Faridpur copper plates, especially to the copper plates of Dharmāditya. However, the record reveals the name of a hitherto unknown king Śrī Dvādaśāditya,¹ who is styled as *Mahārājādhirāja* and he may be regarded as a Post-Gupta king in the line of Dharmāditya. Hence, a pertinent question may be raised, did Vainyagupta issue the gold coins? Or, did he assume the title Dvādaśāditya?

Mr. John Allan represents three gold coins in his catalogue in Plate XXIII, numbered 6, 7, and 8.² They are exactly similar in type to the coins of Candragupta II and Kumaragupta I. They may be described as follows:

Obverse : King standing to left; left hand holding a bow, the right hand holding an arrow. Garuḍa standard bound with fillet is on the left. Between the feet is the letter 'bha'. Beneath the left arm two letters 'ca' and 'ndra' (candra) with crescent above.

Reverse : Goddess Lakṣmī, nimbate, seated facing on lotus, holding fillet in right hand and lotus in left hand; border of dots. The legend is 'Śrī Dvādaśāditya'.

John Allan reads the first letter of the obverse as 'ca' and the second as 'ndra' (Candra). He remarks that "the name beneath the king's arm on the obverse is Candra, undoubtedly for Candragupta, while the reverse legend is not Śrī-Vikramāḥ or Śrī-Vikramāditya, but Śrī-Dvādaśāditya."³ Smith conformed the reading Dvādaśāditya but he is not determined about the reading Candra.⁴ Rapson doubts that the name is really Candra. The 'ca' is certainly like 'va' but what appears to be vowel marks above it is the usual crescent; on no. 588 it is difficult to say whether the second aksara is 'tya' or 'ndra', but is certainly 'ndra' on no. 589 and 590 and there is no reason to doubt the reading Candra. He has come to the conclusion that these coins do not belong to Candragupta II, but to a later ruler whom we may call Candragupta III Dvādaśāditya.⁵

But D.C. Ganguly does not subscribe to the above views. He reads the two letters of the obverse as 'vai' and 'nya' (Vainya) and he is very much interested to assign these coins to Vainyagupta. He differs with Rapson that there is no king of the name of

Candragupta III in the history of ancient India. He came to the conclusion that Vainyagupta, the Imperial ruler of the Gupta dynasty of Magadha, had issued these gold coins and it was Vainyagupta who had assumed the title 'Dvādaśāditya'.⁶

Dr. R.C. Majumdar accepted to Mr. D.C. Ganguly's view. He wrote a paper in the same journal supporting D.C. Ganguly and had suggested the coins legend will be 'Vainya' instead of 'Candra'.⁷ Mr. N.N. Dasgupta, who has written an important paper on Vainyagupta, also accepted to D.C. Ganguly's reading without any hesitation and remarked "things have nevertheless been rendered easier by the ascription doubtless correctly, of the three coins in the British museum to Vainyagupta".⁸ Since then it has been established in the history of ancient Bengal that Vainyagupta issued gold coin and he had assumed the title 'Dvādaśāditya' or he is regarded as the epithet 'Vainyagupta Dvādaśāditya'.⁹

But with a close observation, and on the basis of the present copper plate, it seems to me that these coins are neither of Chandragupta III, nor the coins of Vainyagupta. These coins may more appropriately be assigned to the coins of Dvādaśāditya, who is our newly discovered post-Gupta king. The present author of this paper does not subscribe to the D.C. Ganguly's view for the following reasons :

- (i) If Vainyagupta would assume the title Dvādaśāditya, certainly it would have been referred to in the Gunaighar copper plate and the Nalanda clay seal. But both the records are silent at this regard.
- (ii) It cannot be supported from the religious point of view. Ancient kings generally used dynastic emblem or insignia according to their religious beliefs. They generally attach the symbol of their dear gods and goddess to their copper plates and coins authenticating these.¹⁰ The Gunaighar copper plate of Vainyagupta bears 'bull' as a dynastic symbol. We know that the 'bull' was generally used as a symbolic representation of Śiva. Moreover, it is mentioned in the Gunaighar copper plate that *Mahārājā* Vainyagupta was a devotee of Mahādeva (an epithet of Śiva). A professedly Śaiva (follower of the Śiva) king must not use Garuḍa instead of bull as a royal insignia in his coin.
- (iii) The obverse of these coins bear Garuḍa symbol, which is a symbolic representation of Viṣṇu. Hence, it is ascertained that the issuer king of these coins will be Vaiṣṇava (follower of Viṣṇu). The Gajalakṣmī seal of the present plate and the Lakṣmī symbol of the coins are related to the Vaiṣṇava sect. Dvādaśāditya legend and the symbolic similarity between the coins and the copper plate certainly indicate that these coins were issued by Dvādaśāditya, not Vainyagupta. It may be confirmed when we come to know of a cotemporary king Dvādaśāditya by name, whose copper plate inscription has been discovered. These coins furnish proofs of his existence and reign and they may be considered as a corroborative source to establish this newly discovered king in history.

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From the above discussion, it is quite clear that the coins, which have already been assigned to Vainyagupta, were not actually issued by him. They were hitherto wrongly attributed to Vainyagupta by the scholars. Of course, then it was not possible to identify these coins correctly for the lack of authentic corroborative source material. The copper plate of Dvādaśāditya bears the testimony that these coins were issued by none but him. At the same time, the record has made it clear that 'Dvādaśāditya' was not the title or epithet of Vainyagupta. *Mahārājādhirāja* Dvādaśāditya was another Post-Gupta powerful king who ruled in ancient Bengal especially Vaṅga area. This king is introduced to us by the copper plate and the coins. Hence, the existing idea about the coins of Vainyagupta and his history should be reviewed in the light of the copper plate of Dvādaśāditya.

Notes

1. I have submitted the inscription to the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh and I hope that it will be published soon. The copper plate of Dvādaśāditya is of 34 lines, inscribed on both the sides, the obverse containing 17 lines and the reverse 17 lines of writing. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit prose. The script belong to the Northeastern variety of the Gupta alphabet. From the paleographic point of view these scripts are assigned to the early part of the 6th century A.D. The plate bears a Gajalakṣmī seal and the seal bears a legend *Vārākā-maṇḍala-viṣaya=adhikaraṇasya*. It indicates that the seal was issued from the office of *Adhikaraṇa* of the district of Vārakamaṇḍala. It was issued during the 4th regnal year of the king. The first two lines describe about him to the following style :
Svastyasyām-prthivīyām-apratiratha-yayātyamvariṣa-samadhṛtau-
mahārājādhirāja-Śrī-Dvādaśāditya-bhaṭṭāraka-rājye....
2. John Allan: *Catalogue of the coins of the Gupta Dynasties and of Śaśāṅka, king of Gauḍa*, published by Oriental Books Reprint Corporation 54, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi- 110055, pp. 144.
3. John Allan: *Ibid*, Introduction, pp. LIII.
4. V. A. Smith: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, pp. 82: *Indian Museum Catalogue*, Vol. I, pp. 106-7.
5. Rapson: 1891, *Numismatic Chronicle*, pp. 57.
6. D.C. Ganguly: September 1933, Vainyagupta Dvādaśāditya, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, pp. 785-89.
7. R.C. Majumdar: December 1933, Vainyagupta Dvādaśāditya, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, pp. 989-991.
8. N.N. Das Gupta: January 1939, On Vainyagupta, *Indian Culture*, Vol.V, No. 3, pp. 297-303.
9. R.C. Majumdar (ed.): 1943, *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Published by the University of Dacca, pp. 49.
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The coins should be attributed to Dvadasaditya

Untouchability in Early India: An Analysis

BENUDHAR PATRA

The social structure of India since very early times is based on a rigid, complicated and cancerous cobweb of caste system which not only segmented the ideal society into various water-tight compartments but also led to inequality, disparity and injustice in the society. Though some argued on the basis of ancient literatures that the caste system is necessary for balance, stability and progress of the society, maintenance of the purity of blood and protection of culture, being the backbone of Hindu social structure, it definitely is an evil and inhuman system. It is considered one of the unique features of the Indian society though more in its negative aspects. It has served the society in more than one way, but there is no doubt that it has also generated a multitude of meaningless groups and disturbed the strong and stable cultural unity of the society. It is considered “the most disastrous and blighting of all human institutions” and violates the basic human rights. In the words of M.A. Sherring (1974:293) ‘It is the most baneful, hard hearted and cruel social system that could possibly be invented for damaging the human race’.

Many theories are ascribed to the origin and evolution of caste in the remote period i.e. the *varṇa* or the colour theory, occupational or professional theory, notion of purity and impurity (Sharma 2003: 50), nature of birth etc, and traced back to the *Puruṣasūkta* (hymn of the *Primordial Male*), the Xth *Maṇḍala* of the *R̥g Veda* (Santakke and Kashikar 1946-51 : X,90.12) which contain the earliest reference to the birth of four castes i.e. *brāhmaṇa*, *rājanya/kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdras* respectively from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of God Brahmā, who is considered in the Hindu religion as the creator of this universe, the supreme being or the primeval man (*‘brāhmaṇo’sya mukham āsīd bāhu rājanyah kritah, uru tad asya yad vaiśyah pādbyam śūdro ajayata’*). Whether god Brahmā (the Primeval Man) actually created this system or not, we have no record or authentic evidence but it is an admitted fact that it was devised and designed in a deliberate and calculative way by the then minority but affluent intelligentsia, to suit their selfish interests in the society. They have given the caste a divine colour (the Indians since early times have a religious bent of mind and generally god fearing) and depicted the origin of caste in such a way that the *brāhmaṇas* being emanated from the mouth of the supreme god Brahmā occupied the first rank or the highest position in the society and the *śūdras* being born out of the feet of Brahmā were considered to be the lowest caste or cadre in the society. The *kṣatriya* was second, and the *vaiśya* third in ranking. In other words, the *brāhmaṇa* represents the mouth of the *Puruṣa* or God Brahmā, the *kṣatriya* his arms, the *vaiśya* his thighs and the *śūdra* his feet. Initially, of course, the system was not strictly imposed on the people and caste was based on or determined according to the nature of occupation or division of labour and not on

the criterion of birth, but subsequently with the passage of time this institution was maneuvered so effectively by the conservative few that it began to be determined according to the nature of birth in the respective caste family, which indicates that the caste system is not divinely ordained or created by any god or supernatural being but purposefully designed and framed by the so-called elite and clever brain of the time and thus, is man made and 'an artificial product' (Fick 2007:94). R.S. Sharma (2003:51) says, 'In the Vedic times castes were occupational in nature, and change from one occupation to the other was possible. But over the centuries this change became impossible'. From four castes, in India, we are so caste addicted and the multiplicity of castes and sub-castes is so fast and alarming that at present we have more than three thousand castes and sub-castes, a unique feature not only of Indian society but in the history of mankind.

The literatures like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Manusāhita* or *Manusmṛti* (c.200 BCE - c.200 CE), the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* (c.4th century CE), *Dharmaśāstras*, *Dharmasūtras* of Āpastamba, Baudhāyana, Gautama and Vasiṣṭha, *Grihasūtras*, the *Sāhita*s, *Brāhmaṇas*, the Buddhist literatures, Jain texts, foreign accounts etc are replete with references to various aspects of caste. The *Manusāhita* mentions 61 types of castes while the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* refers to more than 100 castes. The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, a work of c.8th century CE states that 'thousands of mixed castes are produced as a result of the connection of the *vaiśya* women with men of lower castes...' The *brāhmaṇical* law givers explained the origin of numerous castes and sub-castes as a result of mixture between the *varṇas* and called them mixed castes or *varṇa-saūkāra*. Earlier, the term *varṇa* meaning colour used to specify the orders in the society while later on the word *jāti* is specialised to denote caste, which is a group, the membership of which is acquired by birth. The word *jāti* etymologically means 'something into which one is born' which was occasionally used by the ancient authorities as equivalent to *varṇa* (Ghurye 1969:176).

The caste system became so acute that gradually it led to the emergence and evolution of a group of new castes called the untouchables or *achchhutas*, the subordinate and downtrodden section of the society who through the ages were subjected to numerous discriminations and humiliations. In the present paper, a sincere endeavour has been made to trace out the origin and evolution of untouchability in early India and analyse its various features including social, political, economic and cultural contents in historical perspective.

The untouchables of the past are the *dalits* of today. The *dalits* are downtrodden and are traditionally oppressed, suppressed and exploited. They are not only socially degenerated and discarded but also religiously disdained, morally snubbed and economically exploited and impoverished. Analysing the nature of untouchability in contemporary India, K.R. Hanumanthan (2007:126) says untouchability is of two types, i.e. temporary and permanent. According to him:

Untouchability in Early India: An Analysis

“In Hindu society a person becomes temporarily untouchable if he touches or even goes near a corpse, a menstruating woman, or a woman who has just delivered a child. In such cases he/she becomes pure after taking a ceremonial bath. But in the case of an untouchable, untouchability is permanent. It is something which is inherited by birth. Once a man is born an untouchable he carries the disability to the grave and no expiatory ceremony will enable him to get rid of it. Untouchables are isolated permanently from the high caste Hindus and forced to live separately outside the habitation of the former”.

To be an untouchable in Indian caste system is to be very low in and partially excluded from an elaborately hierarchical social order. Untouchables are persons of a discrete set of low castes, excluded on account of their extreme collective impurity from particular relations with higher beings, both human and divine. The untouchables formed lowest stratum of Hindu society and were in that position for centuries together. The touch or shadow or even voice of an untouchable was deemed by caste Hindus as impure and polluting. R.P.Manasi (2005:145) remarks ‘The touch of the *asprīśya-śūdra* [who was undoubtedly an untouchable] is believed to be so impure that even the waters of the Ganges would be polluted thereby’. The untouchables were treated by caste Hindus as sub-human and social segregation kept them untouchable throughout their life. They were born, lived and died as untouchables and as such were humiliated in the society. They were deprived of all social privileges which were available to members of high castes and were forbidden from all public places such as temples, wells, schools and bathing places in the ponds etc. They were described as ‘despised, unholy and impure creatures whose touch caused ceremonial impurity’ (Kamble 1979:79). Defining the term untouchability, A.Aiyappan (1945:37) says:

“untouchability” denotes ‘the socio-religious practice by which Hindus keep large numbers of the lower castes from touching or coming near their persons, houses, temples, tanks and sometimes even public roads’. Persons of higher castes would not interact with them. If a member of a higher caste came in to physical or social contact with an untouchable, the member of the higher caste was defiled, and had to bathe thoroughly to purge him/herself of the impurity. Not only had this, aggravated the pitiable nature of untouchability, social discriminations also developed even among the untouchables. Upper sub-castes among untouchables like *dhobi/rajaka*, *nāi* etc., would not interact with lower order i.e. *chaṇḍāla* and *domes* who were described as ‘outcastes even among outcastes.’”

In ancient times they were called in different names such as *atīśūdra* (extreme *śūdras*), *antyajah* (the last born or outcastes), *antyas* or the *bāhyus* (people living outside villages and towns), *antayoni*, *antavāsāyins*, *prajanya*, *avarṇa* (outside the four *varṇas*), *pañchamā* (the fifth caste), *mlechchha*, *asprīśya* (untouchable), *apapātra* (a term used by Manu about the *chaṇḍālas*), *niśāda* (hunters), *adhamas* (low people), *hina jāti* (degraded caste) etc.

They have also been called by various other names like 'untouchables', *harijanas* (man of God) (a glorified term coined by Narasimha Mehta, a *bhakti* saint of the 17th century CE who appealed to caste Hindus to use the term *harijana* instead of *antyajah* and adopted and popularized by Mahatma Gandhi), 'exterior caste' (Hutton 1961: 192), 'depressed classes' (by British officials) and 'outcastes' and *pariāhs* (derived from the Tamil word *para* or *parāi*).

In modern times, the 'Scheduled Castes' are generally called the *dalits*. The term 'Scheduled Caste' appeared for the first time in April 1935, when the British Government issued the Government of India Act specifying certain castes, races, and tribes as Scheduled Castes. Prior to that, they were generally described by the British as 'depressed classes'. The term *dalit* is a modern concept. Though it was first used in journalistic writings as far back as 1931 to connote the untouchables, it gained popularity only in the early 1970s, with the *Dalit Panther Movement* in Maharashtra. In present times, the term *dalit*, however, implies a condition of being underprivileged and deprived of basic rights and refers to people who are suppressed on account of their status at birth. According to 2001 Census Report they constitute 16 percent of the Indian population and number about 138 million.

The condition and aspirations of dalits of contemporary India are different from those of traditional period. Time has come to enlighten the people at large so that a voice is echoed from the core of every Indian against the age old injustice and inequality in the society and for the establishment of an egalitarian society based on universal brotherhood and the principle of equality. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolishes untouchability as an evil and makes its practice in any form an offence punishable under the law. Article 46 deals with promotion of economic and educational interests of these people, while Articles 320, 332 and 334 provides reservation of seats for the so called *dalits* or Scheduled Caste candidates in the state legislatures as well as the parliament. In order to end untouchability legally, the Government of India passed the 'Untouchability Offence Act' in 1955 (according to which "It is an offence to prevent any person on the ground of untouchability (a) from entering any place of public worship which is open to other persons, professing the same religion, (b) from worshipping or offering prayers or performing any religious service in any place of public worship or bathing in or using the waters of any sacred tank, well, spring or water-course in the same manner as is permissible to other persons professing the same religion; and (c) from access to or use a shop, hotel, public restaurant or place of public entertainment or public conveyance or hospital, dispensary or educational institution or charitable trust"). Untouchability has been criticised in all parts of our country. It does not however, mean that there was no effort earlier in this connection. There had been challenges to the practice of untouchability from the time of the Buddha and Mahāvira (c.6th century BCE). Buddhism opened its door not only to the members of the four *varnas*, but even to the *chandālas* and the *pukkusas*, who could

attain the bliss of nirvāṇa (Cowell 2002: 111, 194; IV, 303). Buddhism made no discrimination in imparting knowledge to the people of all castes including the untouchables. Jainism also admitted to its monastic order people of all *varnas*, and tried to uplift the condition of the untouchables, especially the *chaṇḍālas*. The Jain *Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra* (Charpentier 1922:XII ff) informs us that Harisena, a *chaṇḍāla* by birth visited the sacrificial enclosure of a *brāhmaṇa* teacher and lectured to him on the value of penance, good life, right exertion, self control, tranquility and celibacy. Several social and religious institutions sincerely worked to ameliorate and abolish the practice of untouchability. Many saints of the *bhakti* movement period (c.14th to 16th century CE) such as Nānak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Eknāth, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka and Tukārām rejected the caste discriminations and accepted all castes, including untouchables, into their fold. They opposed caste distinctions and asserted equality before God. The *bhakti* songs taught low castes and *achchhutas* the doctrine of spiritual salvation through *bhakti* (Shah 2001: 198). During the British period this sentiment further gathered steam, and many Hindu socio-religious reform movements such as *Brāhmo Samāj*, *Ārya Samāj* etc., renounced caste based discriminations. The inclusion of so-called untouchables into the main stream was argued for by many social reformers. The Britishers though did not directly involve themselves in the process of ending untouchability; indirectly did a lot in this direction. They did not allow any discrimination in the industries and factories owned by them, and in transportation system like bus service, railway etc., they did not make any differentiation between the high and low caste. In the 19th century, the *Brāhmo Samāj* under Rājā Rāmamohan Roy actively campaigned against untouchability and caste system. The *Ārya Samāj* founded by Swāmi Dayānanda also renounced discrimination against untouchables. Śrī Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahansa and his great disciple Swāmi Vivekānanda, who founded the Rāmakriṣṇa Mission, emphatically advocated for the emancipation of dalits. Nārāyaṇa Guru, a pious Hindu and an authority on the *Vedas* also criticised casteism and campaigned for the rights of lower caste downtrodden Hindus within the context of Hinduism. Mahātmā Gāndhi used the term *harijan*, a euphemistic word for untouchables, literary meaning ‘Sons of God’ or the children of God. He voluntarily decided to live with the untouchables to become one with them and adopted a *dalit* (untouchable) girl as his daughter. He started the *Harijan Sevak Saṅgha* to launch programmes to remove untouchability and improve the economic condition of the untouchables (Shah 2001: 200). The depressed classes were further stirred by the spread of modern education and a group of intellectuals engaged from within the fold of depressed people. Notable among them was Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar, who became the spokesman for depressed people and fought with all sincerity against the evil force of untouchability. ‘To the untouchables’, he said, ‘Hinduism is a veritable chamber of horrors’. Ambedkar was so much disgusted with the acuteness of the Hindu caste structure that he not only changed his religion from Hinduism to Buddhism

but in a reactive tone said that the *Vedas*, *Smṛtis* and *Śāstras* were all instruments of torture which Hinduism used against the untouchables (Labo 2001: 243). Jyotibārāo Phule argued that the lower caste people were the original inhabitants of India, and were conquered in the ancient past by the Brahmin invaders. After independence untouchability was declared an offence and today, both at governmental and non-governmental level, steps are being taken to end this evil institution. But alas! In spite of all these movements and endeavours still there is no eye catching development in the condition of the so called *dalits* or untouchables, and untouchability still persists. Though numerous changes and transformations are being made in the condition and status of *dalits* in the contemporary times, they are still at the lowest ebb of the social structure, and the evil of untouchability is being practised in different parts of the country in one form or other.

Though the origin of caste, especially the practice of untouchability is traditionally traced back to the later Vedic period (c. 1000 BCE to 600 BCE) its exact period and circumstances under which it grew up is difficult to determine. Scholars tried to reconstruct the early history of *dalits* through their speculations, imaginations and interpretations giving birth to different theories some of which often are unconvincing and untenable. However, it is apparent that the *dalits* or *achchhutas* originated and emerged in the ancient society under various circumstances and owing to different mysterious causes. According to K.R. Hanumanthan (2007:126) 'the phenomenon of untouchability in the Indian context is nothing but a by product of the *chaturvarṇa* system prevailing in ancient Hindu society'. To R.S. Sharma (2003:50 & 57) 'The untouchables are sometimes made a part of the *sūdra varṇa*, and some times they are called the fifth varṇa'. He said that the higher *varṇas* as i.e. the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* gradually not only discarded manual and artisanal labour but hated those who practised it, and 'came to look upon certain manual labourers as untouchables'. Further, he said that the 'spirit of contempt for the physical labour of the lower orders ultimately degenerated into the practice of untouchability' (Sharma 1958: 140). Thus, the idea of untouchability has been traced to the theoretical impurity of certain occupations. By this theory, it is understood that those who were engaged in certain types of dirty professions were excluded from mixing with other people and were considered as the untouchables. G.S. Ghurye (1969: 307) also believes that the idea of purity and impurity gave birth to untouchability. He says. 'Ideas of purity, whether occupational or ceremonial, which are found to have been a factor in the genesis of caste, are the very soul of the idea and practice of untouchability.' He further says that the ideas of untouchability and unapproachability arose out of the ideas of ceremonial purity, first applied to the aboriginal *sūdras* in connection with the sacrificial ritual and expanded and extended to other groups because of the theoretical impurity of certain occupations (Ghurye 1969:180). Vivekananda Jha (2007:178) is of the opinion that "untouchability of the *chandālas* initially developed out of the notion of pollution current in the pre-Mauryan

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phase of the post-Vedic class society in northern India and their low ritual ranking in the existing hereditary *jāti* framework of social stratification corresponded with the prevailing uneven distribution of wealth and power and their own deplorable material condition.” In the words of D.N. Majumdar (1958:326) ‘the untouchable castes are those who suffer from various social and political disabilities, many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by higher castes’.

According to another view, the origin of untouchability can be traced to the cultural lag of the aboriginal tribes, who were mainly hunters and fowlers, in contrast to the members of the brahmanical society, who possessed the knowledge of metals and agriculture, and were developing urban life (Sharma 1958:132). It is said that untouchability started due to cultural and racial differentiation between the Aryans and aboriginals. The Aryans who considered themselves culturally and racially superior refused to touch those, who according to them were Culturally and racially inferior. The origin of untouchability has also been traced to the intermixture of castes. The doctrine of *ahimsā* and various socio-religious taboos which existed among the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains also played an important role for the growth and proliferation of untouchability in ancient India (Hanumanthan 2007: 127).

Several factors such as racial discrimination, religious diversity, social rigidity and compartmentalization, economic disparity etc., were responsible for the origin and development of untouchability in ancient India. Once a section of society was condemned as low caste and untouchables, some social customs and traditions developed around them. The two forms of marriages, i.e. *anuloma* and *pratiloma* also led to the development of the so called *varṇasamkara* (mixed castes), lower castes and untouchability in the society. The early law-books traced the origin of a dozen of mixed castes (*varṇasamkara jātis*) to such marriages. According to *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* the son of a *sūdra* by a *brāhmaṇa* woman is branded as a *chaṇḍāla* (Buhler: XIV, 1.9.17.7). It further says that the son of a *brāhmaṇa* by a *sūdra* woman is called a *niṣāda* (Buhler: II, 2.3.29). The son of a *niṣāda* by a female of the *sūdra* caste is known as *pulkasa*, and the son begotten by a *sūdra* on a female of the *niṣāda* caste is known as a *kukkutaka* (Buhler: I, 1.9.17. 13-14) The issue of the union of a *kṣatriya* and a *sūdra* woman is known as an *ugra* (Buhler: I, 9.17.5) while that of a *vaiśya* and a *sūdra* is to be regarded as a *rathakāra* (Buhler: I, 9.17.6). According to Gautama, people begotten by the *brāhmaṇa*, the *kṣatriya*, the *vaiśya* and the *sūdra* on a woman of the *sūdra* caste are respectively known as *parasavas*, *yavanas*, *karaṇas*, and *sūdras* (Buhler: II, 2.3.30) From the above description one thing is evident that on the basis of the nature of marriage numerous mixed castes were born, many of whom were relegated to the position of untouchables (Sharma 1958: 1 19). In the words of J.H. Hutton (1961: 207), ‘The origin of the position of the exterior castes is partly racial, partly religious. and partly a matter of social custom’.

Disabilities in social sphere, religious arena and economic condition have been imposed upon the untouchables by the Hindu society through the ages. In the social sphere the untouchables were prohibited from using the common/public wells, bathing *ghāts* etc. Even they were prevented from using public roads and schools. Their shadow was enough to defile the members of the higher castes. In social hierarchy they were placed at the lowest end and had no social respect. In the economic sphere, the untouchables were not allowed to take up the job or profession meant for higher castes. They lived in dirty slums in utter poverty because of their economic backwardness caused by imposed disabilities. Another serious economic disability was that the untouchables could not own property and were forced to engage in unrewarding traditional occupations which they had been carrying out since generations. In the religious field, they were prohibited from entering temples and worshipping gods and goddesses. An untouchable could not take a dip in the holy water or take any dead body to any *ghāt* for burning. He was not allowed to read any religious book and could not perform any religious ceremony by himself while the *brāhmins* also refrain from rendering religious services to these people. The untouchables in early times also suffered from serious political disabilities and were not allowed to participate in political activities.

Ancient Indian literatures refers to untouchables in various names some of which are as follows : the *chanḍālas*, *niṣādas* (hunters), *pukkusas* (hunters), *āyogavas* (a mixed caste), *ugras*, *ksattr̥s*, *svapākas*, *antyavāsayins*, *medas*, *madgus*, *cuncuṣ*, *kukkutakas* (poulterers), *sankarikas* (pork butchers or a despised caste) *veṇas* (basket-makers), *rajakas* or *dhobis* (washermen), *saundīkas* (sellers and vendors of spirituous liquors who were treated as the people belonging to the despised caste), *vyādha* (hunters), *chamars* (leather workers), *kaivartas* or *macchuāras* (boatman or fisherman), *māhars*, *pāṇas*, *domas*, etc. According to the *Mahābhārata*, *niṣādas* lived by catching fishes (*Niṣādoun Matshyadhanau*) (Sukhthankar et al 1927-1956: XIII.48.12).

Manu is also of the same view regarding the occupation of the *niṣādas* (Mandilk 1936: X,48). According to Manu, the *ugras*, *ksattr̥s* and *pukkusas* were engaged in the catching and killing animals living in the holes (Mandfik 1936: X, 49). *Viṣṇu Smṛti* has described that the *chanḍālas* should live by executing the criminals sentenced to death (Jolly 1881: XVI). Atri declares a washerman, a leather-worker, a cane-worker, a fisherman, and a Bhil to be *antyajas* or outcastes (Ghurye 1969:98). The *pāṇas* who were also some times known as *chanḍālas* were associated with the removal and cremation of corpses.

If the Xth Maṇḍala of the *Ṛg Veda*, can be considered as being the origin of caste system definitely the notion of untouchability germinated thereafter. It is a well known fact that the Harappan or the Indus Valley (c.3000 BCE) social stratification was not based on caste system, though social disparity was there. Untouchability raised its ugly head during the Later Vedic period (c.1000BCE-600 BCE) and worked as a canker in the core

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of the later Vedic society. During this period the *śūdras*, the fourth order in the social stratification were disdained by other three high castes considering them as unclean. Even the upper three castes did not touch the *śūdras* which gradually led to the development of untouchability in the society. From that period this evil system is continuing till today in varied circumstances with modifications.

Though we have no clear cut idea about the social structure of the Harappans or the Indus Valley people it is evident that discrimination occurred in that society after the coming of the Aryans into India around c.2000 BCE who considered the original inhabitants of India with whom they came into contact as *dāsas*, *dasyus* or inferiors. The Aryans, highly self conscious sharing a common language and religion, were according to Max Muller, from Central Asia and fought a protracted battle against the indigenous people of India and looked down upon them (indigenous people) as culturally inferior and shunned them as ritually unclean. Once conquered by superior military technologies of the Aryans, some of the original inhabitants, supposed to be the Drāvidiāns withdrew into regions as yet unconquered by the Aryans, whereas others were incorporated as separate and inferior castes within the Aryan dominated society. The Aryans being comparatively white skinned, began to hate the dark skinned original inhabitants. G.S. Ghurye (1969:165) remarks, 'Having come across people, who were very dark in colour and had rather snub noses, they described the earlier settlers as 'dark colour', as people without noses, and applied to them the term '*dāsa*' which in Iranian stood for 'enemy'. This marked the distinction and division of the society into Aryan and non-Aryan or *Anārya* or *Āryetara* (inferior to the Aryans) which subsequently paved the way for the birth of caste in the Indian history. But R.S. Sharma (1958:24) believes that:

“The name *dāsa* in the sense of slave was derived not from the non Aryan inhabitants of India but from a people allied to the Indo-Aryans. In the later period of the *Ṛg Veda*, the term *dāsa* may have been employed indiscriminately not only to cover the survivors of the original Indo-European *dāsas* but also pre Aryan peoples such as *dasyus* and *rākṣasas*, and also those sections of the Aryans who were impoverished or reduced to subjection on account of internal conflicts within their ranks.”

It is, however, believed that by the time of *Puruṣasūkta* (*Ṛg Veda* X), the society was divided into three *varnas* viz. *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya* but with the passage of time when some of the original inhabitants, whom the Aryans considered as inferior were absorbed into the Aryan society, the fourth *varṇa* i.e. the *śūdras* came into existence (Singh 1998: 13). According to G.S. Ghurye (1969: 172) 'When they [the Aryans] entered India they must have had among them at least three well-defined classes, intermarriage between whom must have been rather rare, though not positively forbidden. Their first regulations in this line began with the task of excluding the *śūdras*, which class must have been largely formed by the aborigines, from their religious worship.' The *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad*

Gītā, the *Manusmṛti* and the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* also refer to the four *varṇas*. It is stated in the *Mahābhārata* (*Śāntiparvan*): He who is pure, consecrated by sacraments, has studied the *Veda*, performs the rites of purification and religious observances, eats the remains of oblation is called a *brāhmaṇa*, he who performs the duties of a ruler and studies the *Veda* is called a *kṣatriya*; he who takes to trade and cattle breeding, agriculture and acquisition of wealth, is pure and perfect in the study of the *Veda* is a *vaiśya*; but one who takes all kinds of food, does all kinds of work, is unclean and has abandoned the *Veda* and does not practice pure observations is a *śūdra*. If these elements were not in a *śūdra* but were found in a *dvija* (twice born), a *śūdra* would be no *śūdra* and a *brāhmaṇa* no *Brāhmaṇa* (Singh 1998: 14 & 15) The *Bhagavad Gītā* mentions “the duties of *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and also of *śūdras* are distributed according to the nature of *guṇas* (qualities) (Singh 1998: 14&15) The *Maitrayaniya Samhitā* also says that merit and not parentage was the criterion for the status of a man in society (Schroeder 1923: 48.1; 108.9). In other words, it was quality and character that determined the *varṇa* of a person. From the above analysis, it is apparent that the four *varṇas* were largely created on the basis of cultural, social and intellectual achievements of the people and the nature of the vocation they chose for their livelihood. But with the march of time it transformed drastically and was determined according to the nature of birth and parentage. It is said that so long the division of society was based on the profession and *guṇa* it was known as *varṇa* system and when importance started to being attached to birth in deciding the social status and occupation of the people castes and sub-castes were developed.

The early *Pāli* texts (Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: III, 169-78; II, 152,183-184) often mention the five despised castes viz. the *chanḍāla*, the *niṣada* (hunters), the *veṇa* (basket-makers), the *rathakāra* (chariot-makers) and the *pukkusa* (hunters). They are described as having low families (*nichakula*) or inferior births (*hinajāti*). The *Jātakas* or the birth stories of Buddha refer to *chanḍālas* and *pukkusas* as lowest castes in the society who roughly correspond to the untouchable sections of the *brahmanical* society. The Jain texts also refer to the *chanḍālas* and *pukkusas* as the subordinate and downtrodden people in the society.

The *chanḍālas* were depicted as a despised group, to see members of which is to see evil, to avert which one must at least wash one's eyes. They are described as occupying sites outside regular villages and towns. They could be detected by their special dialect while sweeping was their hereditary occupation (Ghurye 1969:312-313). The presence of a *chanḍāla* was considered a sufficient ground for stopping the recitation of the *Veda*. According to R.S. Sharma (1958: 125-126) ‘originally the *chanḍālas* [*caṇḍālas*] seem to have been an aboriginal tribe’ who gradually came to be looked upon as untouchables. In the *Pāli* texts the *chanḍālas* are clearly depicted as untouchables. A *Jātaka* (Cowell 2002: IV, 397) describes the *chanḍālas* as the meanest men on earth and contact with the air

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that touched a *caṇḍāla*'s body was regarded as polluting (Cowell 2002: III, 233) The very sight of a *caṇḍāla* foreboded evil. The *caṇḍālas* who were despised as untouchables by the members of the higher *varṇas*, were especially hated by the Brāhmins (Sharma 1958:127).

Manu prescribes a very miserable and pitiable life for a *caṇḍāla*. He states that the dwelling of *caṇḍālas* shall be outside the village and their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys. They were not permitted to appear in towns and villages at night, where they could work only during the day (Mandalik 1836: X, 54-55). They were to be treated as *apapātras*, i.e. the vessels used by them were not used by other castes. Kautilya upholds Manu's view by prescribing that the *antyavāsayin* who seem to be identical with the *caṇḍāla* lived outside villages near the burial grounds (Shastri 1924: II.4). Their dress shall be the garments of the dead. They shall eat their food from broken dishes, black iron shall be their ornaments and they shall carry out the corpses who have no relatives. The water tank used by the *caṇḍālas* could not be used by anybody else (Shastri 1924: 1.14; Mandalik 1836: X. 51-56). Āpastarnba holds that to touch and see a *caṇḍāla* is sinful (Buhler 1932: 11.1.2.8) A *brāhmaṇa*, drinking water from the vessel of a *caṇḍāla*, has to undergo the penance of living on cow's urine for a number of days.

Gradually, the *caṇḍālas* on account of their being hunters and fowlers were absorbed in the *brahmanical* society and were assigned the task of removing dead bodies of animals and human beings. Sometimes they were engaged for street sweeping (Cowell 2002: IV, 390). The *caṇḍālas* in fact led a life of misery and squalor. It is known from a *Jātaka* that the *caṇḍālas* possessed a pair of coloured garments (in order to distinguish them from the rest of the population), a griddle, a ragged robe and an earthen bowl (Cowell 2002: IV, 379). From an analysis, as the references to the *caṇḍālas* are found aplenty in the later *Jātakas*, it is apparent that they became popular towards the end of the pre-Mauryan period or even to the later times (Sharma 1958: 128).

During the period from c.200 CE to c.500 CE, the practice of untouchability not only increases but also intensified. Fa-Hien, the Chinese pilgrim who visited India during the reign of the Gupta monarch Chandragupta II informs us that, when the *caṇḍālas* enter the gate of a city or a market place, they strike a piece of wood to give prior notice of their arrival so that men may know and avoid them (Legge 1886:43). He also informs us that the *caṇḍālas* are fishermen and hunters, and sell fish and meat; they drink intoxicating liquor and eat onions and garlies (Legge 1886: 43). The *Brhaspati Smṛti* (Aiyangar 1941: *Prayaschita* Verse, 49;50) provides a penance for removing the sin arising out of touching a *caṇḍāla*. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* prescribes a purificatory rite for the person who looks at an *antyajā* or an *antyavāsayin* [*caṇḍālas*] (Pargiter 1904:25.34-36). Alberuni in the early part of the 11th century CE grouped together *caṇḍāla* and *doma* as two of the groups 'not reckoned among any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty works, like the

cleansing of the villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class, and distinguished only by their occupations” (Sachau 1993: 101-2). The *domas* besides village sweeping, worked in cane also. In modern times this caste group (the *domas*) are existing in various states like Punjab, Himachal, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa etc, in various names (i.e *chanal* caste in Himachal, *chuhār* in Punjab, *bhāngi mehtar* in *Rajsthan* and Maharashtra, *hāri* in Bengal and *hāddi/doma/dombo* in Orissa).

The Jain text *Bṛhatkalpa Bhāṣya* states that the *medas* who were considered untouchables in early India used to hunt animals day and night with bow and arrow (Malayagiri and Kshemakirti 1933-38: *Gatha*, 2766). From the *Vyavahāra Bhāṣya* we know that the *svapākas* (another untouchable caste) cooked the flesh of dogs and sold bow strings (Rolle 2006: 3.92). The *pukkusas* and the *veṇas* belong to the aboriginal tribes and were treated as untouchables in ancient times. The *pukkusas* lived by hunting while the *veṇas* along with hunting were working in bamboo (Sharma 1958: 128). However, the *pukkusas* though earlier lived by hunting were gradually absorbed in the brahmanical society and were assigned with the duties such as removing flowers from the temple and palace (Cowell 2002: III, 195), which shows that they were not regarded as being quite as degraded as the *caṇḍālas*. It has been mentioned in a *Jātaka* (Cowell 2002: IV, 251) that a *veṇukara* or *velukara* (a member of the *veṇa* aboriginal tribe) went into the forest with his knife to collect a bundle of bamboos for his trade. The *rathakāras* who enjoyed a high social standing in the *brahmanical* texts were regarded as a despised caste in the Buddhist texts. Question arises why the *rathakāras* who formed a part of the Aryan society and even were provided *upanayana* by the *Grihasūtras* were treated as despised caste in the Buddhist texts. It assumes that perhaps one of the reasons why the *rathakāra* was treated as a condemned caste in the Buddhist texts was the Buddhist aversion to war, for which the *rathakāra* prepared chariots. In any case, however, it is clear that they were not degraded to the same level as the *caṇḍāla* and the *pukkusa*. The *niṣādas* who were supposed to be a pre-Aryan tribal people were depicted in the Buddhist texts as despised castes and were down-trodden and subordinate untouchables in the society. They lived in their own villages (where all *niṣādas* used to stay) and by profession were hunters (Cowell 2002: 11, 200; VI, 71 f. 170).

The *chamāras* who are traditionally leather workers constitutes another important *dalit* or untouchable caste in the ancient Indian society. Manu refers to them as despised caste because of their work in dirty, filthy and impure commodity (Mandlik 1836: X, 36, 49). In modern times, in different parts of India such as Punjab, Haryana, U.P, Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa etc, they are known as *mochi* (shoe-maker). Kashmir poet Kalhana, in the 12th century CE has narrated the tale of a *charmakrit* (leather worker), otherwise called *pudukrit* (shoemaker), who lived in the capital city of Kashmir during the 7th century CE. The *chamāras* in ancient times were counted among the unclean untouchables because they used to take the flesh of dead animals or beef in their diet.

Untouchability in Early India: An Analysis

To sum up, we can say that the evil institution of untouchability which originated in the ancient past, in spite of sincere endeavours to abolish it, continues to be a slur in the Indian society and has brought much disgrace to the nation. The inhuman treatment meted out to these people-the so-called untouchables, the extent of indignities suffered by them and the disabilities from which they suffered, particularly in the early times is difficult to measure. Untouchability is not only an evil institution but a curse which has done more harm than any good to the society and should be eradicated and uprooted as quickly as possible. It is against humanity, social justice, national consciousness and national solidarity. It was a man made system and was devised to suit the convenience and self interest of the so called high caste people. It is in no way favourable for the progress and prosperity of the country, rather it creates jealousies, hostilities, inequality, injustice and indiscipline in the society curbing the advancement of the nation as a whole. This unwanted and unholy but deep rooted institution should be brought to an end for the larger interest of the society. It is only after bringing and treating the untouchables or *dalits* at par with other sections of the society that a sense of self respect will develop in them and they will then flow in the main stream of nation's development and advancement. 'Untouchability is but an excrescence, a malignant outgrowth which can be and must be removed' (Masani 2005: 158). Eradication of this practice may take time but its removal and abolition will enhance India's prestige in the international sphere and glorify the Indian culture further.

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Gaṇa Image from Mangalkot : A Note

RANGANKANTI JANA

In the lower Gangetic West Bengal, Mangalkot is one of the major ancient sites. Mangalkot thana as well as the village of same name (Latitudes 23°32'N, Longitudes 87°54'E) is located in Katwa sub-division of Burdwan district of West Bengal, on the right bank of the river Kunur.

The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa mentions a place name similar to the aforesaid name as 'maṅgal koṣṭhaka'.¹

The *śloka* tells—"Ujjayinyam tatha pūyam piṭham maṅgalakoṣṭhakam
Subāmaṅgala Caṇḍyākhyā yatrāham varadāyini" (14/14)

But it does not give any solid clue about the geographical position of the aforesaid place name. In some tantric texts and in some vernacular Maṅgal Kāvya² of the medieval or the late medieval periods there are some geographical names such as Maṅgalkoṭ, Ujāni, Kogrām etc.

This very archaeological site was excavated for five consecutive seasons by the Department of Archaeology, the University of Calcutta since 1986-87.³ It is revealed from the excavation report⁴ that the remains of the human settlement had been found from the pre-historic period. What is remarkable regarding this site is that still today human population is living in the same place. Through the excavations, number of archaeological objects of the Maurya-Suṅga-Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods have been discovered from the different stratified levels.

The image of this note was discovered from the Kunur river in the year 2002 (January) by a local fisherman. Now it is under the custody of the Museum and Art Gallery, the University of Burdwan. This dwarf male image is curved from a single sand stone. Size of this image is Ht : 1.19mt × Width : 0.63mt × thickness : 0.46mt. The Half seated-half standing plumpy dwarf image is on a cubical stone block. His two hands are extended upwards, probably holding some load, but unfortunately from the elbows two hands are broken. The upper part of his head is also damaged. He is with smiling face and his eyes are closed. The image is adorned with a tiara or a decorated headband. Each elongated ear is ornamented with a ring consisting of two big pearls or fames. He is also decorated with five rows of beaded string around his neck. The upper part of his body is fully uncovered, but the lower part of the image is covered by a Dhoti like cloth above the knees. The knot of the lower garment and waist band are noteworthy. The prominent knot of the lower garment below the navel, the front and back folds of the lower garment (Dhoti), and the knot of the string behind the image's neck are curved very neatly, which gives the image

a three dimensional effect Fig. 1. Overall the whole body of the image bears a very serene attitude. The quarry of the sand stone was perhaps in the geographical area of Bengal (better to say modern West Bengal). Following the stylistic features, it appears that probably this image belongs to Suṅga-Kuṣāṇa period. The stylistic features show the North Indian style. In ancient time there was a connection between some parts of Bengal with the middle Gangetic area, which reflects in the stylistic features.⁴

According to A.K. Coomaswamy “as Atlantes, supporters of buildings and super structures (PL 13, fig 1,2,3) and as garland bearers (PL 23, fig 1,2) Yakṣas are constantly represented in early Indian art (Bhārat, Sāñchi, Gāndhādra etc.). Those who support Kuvera’s flying palace are designated Guhyas (Mahābhārata 2, 10, 3); Kuvera is Guhyapati. The Guhyas are essentially earth-gnomer (cf PL 13 fig-1).⁵ The upperpart of the western gate of the Sāñchi stūpa bears a number of male caryatid with different facial expressions⁶. In this regard Devala Mitra’s opinion is “the varied facial expressions of these dwarfs of rugged strength, all represented on the west gateway, are particularly note worthy; some are groaning under the weight, some again bearing it resignedly, while others taking it rather lightly.”⁷

But the problem is , on the basis of a few specimens of sculptures, it is hard to restore the whole lost picture of sculptural development of early Bengal. Most of the unique specimens of early Bengal have been discovered not through proper excavations. Mostly these are all surface finds. So it is difficult to find out the real historical significance of these specimens with the site or sites concerned.⁸

Notes and References

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4. Gautam Sengupta, 1995, ‘Bāṅglār-Bhāskarya’, *Kaushikī*, Howrah/Calcutta, P-255, Hereinafter ‘Bāṅglār-Bhāskarya’.
5. A. K Coomaswamy, 1971, *Yakṣas* (Part I and II), New Delhi, P-8, Hereinafter–*Yakṣas*.
6. *Yakṣas*, Plate 10 No. 1.
7. Devala Mitra, 1965, *Sāñchi*, New Delhi, Page 19 (footnote No. 2).
8. Interested reader may read “Bāṅglār-Bhāskarya”, *Kaushikī*, Howrah/Calcutta, 1995.

Gaṇa Image from Mangalkot : A Note



Gaṇa Image Mangalkot, Burdwan

‘Mausula’—A Lesser Tradition? Or A Lesser Known Śaiva Tradition

SUSMITA BASU MAJUMDAR

“*Lākulaḥ Mausulaḥ caiva dvidhā tantraḥ prakīrtitaḥ*”

The (Pāśupata) canon is held to have two divisions:

the *Lākula* and the *Mausula*. *Svacchanda Tantra* 6 (11) 52

Musula or *Musalendra* was the founder of the lineage which was known after him as *Mausula*. Though *Mausula* tradition did not gain much popularity and hardly finds mention in the principal texts of Śaivism, yet here we would like to trace this sub-tradition in the epigraphic and literary sources and also would evaluate its position in the hierarchy of the Śaiva traditions. Gleanings from literary and epigraphic sources clearly indicate towards the existence of this Śaiva tradition in the early medieval period to be precise in 7th century A.D. It was an off shoot of the *Lakulīśa śākhā* of the Śaiva pantheon is reflected from epigraphic source yet the textual sources mention it as separate or distinct from *Lākula* division. *Musala*¹, *Musula* or *Musalendra* the founder of this sub-tradition finds mention in the *Svacchanda tantra* (SvT) and its commentary. Here, we have used the term tradition as an alternative for the Sanskrit term ‘*para ūparā*’ which has been used in the Junwani copper plate of *Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna*, the *Pāṇḍuvamśin* ruler of *Dakṣiṇa Kosala* (Raikwar and Singh 1994, Basu Majumdar 2007). The inscription precisely uses ‘*Somādi-pāra ūparya...*’, meaning Soma and other traditions, which further includes the above mentioned sub-tradition.

Mausula tradition has been mentioned as associated with the *Lākula* tradition in both categories of sources epigraphic source and in the two texts *Svacchanda tantra* and *Niśvāsamukha*. *Lākula* was a division of the *atimārga*² (Sanderson, Alexis: 1988) and *āgamic Śaivism* that of *mantra-mārga*. *Lakulīśa* had four disciples according to various epigraphic and literary sources, namely *Kuśika*, *Gārgya*, *Maitra* and *Kaurushya* (CII and Bhandarkar: 1906-7). These disciples of *Lakulīśa* had their own followers or disciples and propagated their own religious tradition, which they themselves associate with *Lākula* tradition. Since, *Lakulīśa* was regarded as the last incarnation of Śiva, claiming their association with the *Lākula* tradition might have provided them certain amount of legitimacy and an elevated status in the then society.

According to *Kṣemarāja* there were two divisions or *tantras* within the *Pāśupata* tradition namely *Pāśupata* proper founded by *Lakulīśa* and designated as *Lākula śākhā* and the other was the *Mausula śākhā* founded by the eponymous pupil belonging to the *Lakulīśa* lineage. These *Mausulas* though *Pāśupatas* in wider sense, too stem from *Lakulīśa*. They are put on a lower scale by the *Svacchanda-tantra* (SvT) and its commentator. The

differences between the various sub-traditions within a larger tradition, was mainly based on the hierarchy of highest stations, which was their ultimate goal. The observance of rites and rituals by the *Mausulas* leads them finally to the *Māyā* reality (SvT: 11. 7 l,cd), the *Pāśupatas* who base themselves on the eight *Pramāṇas* and belong to the *Lākula* division reach the *Īśvara* reality in the Pure Universe (SvT: 10. 1169cd-1170ab).

The difference between the various sub-traditions of the *Pāśupata* tradition is indicated in the 11th *Paṭata* of the *Svacchanda-tantra* which provides a hierarchy of highest stratum (*parama padam*) or the ultimate goal of the followers or practitioners of the faith. *Mausule kārūke caiva māyā-tattvam prakīrtitam* (SvT 11.71cd)³, implies that the *Mausulas* are grouped with *kārūka*. Bhandarkar conjectures that the word *kārūka* is probably a corruption of *Kauruṣya*, the name of the third or fourth pupil of *Lakulīśa* according to the *Purāṇas*. However, Pathak and Lorenzen refute this identification. The followers of both the *śākhās*, whose observances (*vrata*) deal with a multitude of rituals, reach the worlds of the *Rudras Kṣemeśa* and *Brahmasvāmin*, whom *Svacchanda-tantra* (SvT: 10.1125) had situated on the yonder side of the barrier (*granthi*), though still in the *Māyā* reality (Bakker 2000).

Mausulas were engaged in ritual activities, forsaking the more rigorous portion of the *Pāśupata* praxis. Unfortunately none of the *Pramāṇa* texts ascribed by *Kṣemarāja* to this school has survived. However, the alleged dependence of the *Mausula* text corpus on the *Lākula Pramāṇas* seems to allow the inference that this sect also acknowledged the hierarchy of Rudra worlds and as such deviated from the *Pañcārtha* school. The Junwani copper plate inscription also mentions that the *Mausulas* were initiated into the *mahāvratā* as the *Lākula* and among the rituals being performed by them are *yāga*, *dīkshā* and *vyākhyāna*. Here, *dīkshā* definitely means initiating into the *Mahāvratā* which was more rigorous than the rest i.e. *yāga* (*yaja* or sacrificial rites) and *vyākhyāna* (i.e. exposition).

Professor Alexis Sanderson⁴ mentions that the *Jayadratha-yāmala* which belongs to the (later) *Bhairava* scriptures of āgamic Śaivism has reference to the 66 embodiments as *Bhavas* who reside in the 66 *Māna* i.e. *Pramāṇa* (worlds). These embodiments or manifestations are divided into two lines of *gurus* (*gurupaṅktis*), a set of 28 *Śivas* and one of 38 *Rudras*, which are associated with different levels of Śaiva teachings. The first set begins with *Śveta* and of which the last two *gurus* are *Someśa* and *Lakulīśa* is said to bestow exegesis of the scriptures and occasionally, initiation, following the division of the *Pramāṇa-jñāna*.

“Someśo Lakulīśaś ca hy aṣṭāvīṣṭaty amī śivaḥ II

Vyākhyān-ānugraha karāḥ pramāṇa jñān-abhedataḥ II

Prāsaṅgikītv asau teṣāṃ sadyo ‘nugraha-kāritā II” (JY 4. 453-454, after Bakker 2000).

The second line of 38 *Rudras*, which begins with *Vareśvara* and ends with *Vaṣaṭkāra*, is said to be authorized to initiate and those belonging to this segment are described as propounding the teachings of *Bhairava*. All the 28 incarnations had ‘īśa’ ending names

or 'īśa' was appended to their names to indicate their incarnated status. Here, an attempt has been made to legalize the incarnation process by its inclusion in the text. The above statement as mentioned by Sanderson on the basis of textual evidence clearly indicates that there were 28 incarnations of Śiva and we know from various categories of sources that *Lakulīśa* was the last incarnation. What is worth mentioning here is the addition or association of 38 Rudras to the line of 28 incarnations which shows their lower status as compared to that of the previous 28, yet, by associating them with the 28 and naming them '*Rudras*' an attempt to elevate their status is clearly indicated. As mentioned earlier, these 66 embodiments (set of 28 incarnations of Śiva and 38 *Rudras*) have been mentioned as lineage of *gurus* or preceptors (*guru-paṅktis*). The present author has elsewhere (Basu Majumdar 1999, 2008) already argued that this was the process of incarnation in Śaivism was probably inspired by the similar process in Vaiṣṇavism and had declared the preceptors as *avatāras* or incarnation of Śiva himself. What is interesting here is that an attempt to end the process of incarnation was made soon after *Lakulīśa* was declared the incarnation as most of the texts, literary and epigraphs, mention him as the last incarnation of Śiva. Yet, the *Jayadratha-yāmala* mentions the set of another 38 (*gurus*) in addition to the previous set of 28 who were declared as direct incarnations of Śiva were also preceptors. Thus the process of incarnation did not actually come to an end even after declaring *Lakulīśa* as the last incarnation. Later 38 other preceptors were given the status of *Rudras* and not Śiva himself. The Junwani copper plate inscription has an indication that these 38 embodiments who also claimed incarnated status declared themselves or were declared by their followers as incarnations of *Lakulīśa* the last incarnation of Śiva or other preceptors belonging to the previous set of 28 *gurus*. This probably depended on their *guru-paṅkti* or lineage to which they belonged. Further the Junwani copper plate shows that this was not strictly followed as a rule as *Musa* the guru has been mentioned as *Musalīśa* with the suffix 'īśa' used for the 28 incarnations. Thus scriptural knowledge was not always followed in practice.

Here, we would like to analyse the evidence provided by the Junwani copper plate inscription (relevant portions only) in detail:

Junwani Copper Plate Inscription of Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna (regnal year 57)
(Raikwar and Singh 1994, Bakker 2000, Shastri 2001, Basu Majumdar, 2007)

Line 3 : — rā-

Line 4 : jñāḥ śrī Harṣaguptasya sūnuḥ Soma-vaṇśa(vaṇśa)- sambhavaḥ tpa(pa)rama māheśvaro mātā-

Line 5 : pitṛi-pād-ānudhyātaḥ śrī Mahāśivagutpta-rājadevaḥ kuśalī II Uṇi(Oṇi)

Line 6 : bhogīya-grāma(e) Pāśipadraka-Kurapadraka-sahite I brāhmaṇā(a) saṁ(sa)-mpu(pū)jya ta

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Line 7 : t-pratinivāsi-kuṭumbino yathā-kal-ādhyāsinaḥ samāharṭṛ-sannidhāṭṛ-pra

Line 8 : bhṛīti(tī)n=asmat-pād-opajīvināḥ sarbba(vva)-rāja-puruṣā samājñāpayati
viditam=a-

Second Plate first side:

Line 9 : stu bhavatārṇ yatha=āsmābhir=ayam grāmaḥ sa-Kurapadrakaḥ Vājasaneya-ca-

Line 10 : raṇād=abhyartha Bhāṇḍagāra-Tulapadrakam=Oṇī bhogiyam parivartena
datvā(ttvā)

Line 11 : sat(m)prati sannidahnāḥ s-opanidhānaḥ sarbba(vva)-kara-dāna-sametāḥ
sarbba(vva)-pīḍā-

Line 12 : vajja(rjji)tas=sa-das(ś)āparādhaḥ prata(tī)śiddha-cāṭa-bhata-praveśaḥasyām
(syā)I

Line 13 : māpa(gha)-paurṇamāśya(syā)m=atra-aiva=ātma-kārita-śrī-Bāleśvara-
bhaṭṭāraka-tapo-

Line 14 : vana-pratipālan-ārtham=āropitebhyah Śivasya mūrtti(ī)nām=aṣṭau vighrahe-
śvarānām Ga-

Line 15 : haneśasya mūrttayo Rudrāḥ ṣaṭsa(śa)ṣṭy-ānugrāhakā yuge yuge parivarttamā-

Line 16 : na adhunā kali-kālam=āsādyā śrīmal-Lakulīśanātho=vatīryya Somasa(śa)

Second Plate : second side:

Line 17 : rmm-ākya brāhmaṇa-kule bhūtvā mahāb(v)ratena dīkṣito Jagadindus=ten=āpi

Line 18 : Muga(sa)lisa=tataḥ Som-ādi-pāramparya-krameṇa-sthāne guru śrī(ī) Rudraśo
(so)ma-pra-

Line 19 : śiṣya-śrī-Tejaśo(so)ma-śiṣe(ṣye)bhya(h)śrī(śrī)(ma)d-Bhi(ī)masoma padebh-
ya(h) śiṣya-praśiṣyāṇā(nām)

Line 20 : yāga- di(dī)kṣā-vyākhyān-ānnva(nna)-sattra-prāvarttanāya bhagna-vidi(dī)
rṇṇa-devakula-

Line 21 : saūskṛtaye ca mātā-pitṛor=ātmanaś=ca puṇya-ābhibṛ(vṛ)ddhaye sama-kālopa

Line 22 : bhog-ārtham=ā-candra-tāra-ārkkam=udaka-pūrbba(vva)karṇ=tāmbra(mra)-
śāsanena pratipādī(di)-

Line 23 : ta ity=avagatya samucita-bhoga-bhāg-ādikam=upanayanto bhavantaḥsukham
prati-

Line 24 : vasantu II—

Thus the inscription mentions that:

Mahāśivagupta, the king, son of *Harṣagupta*, of the *soma-kula* or lunar lineage, an ardent worshipper of Maheśvara, after honouring the brahmanas in the villages *Pāśipadraka* along

with *Kurapadraka* situated in the *Ōṇi bhoga*, the king informed the residents of the village together with *Samahartr*, *Sannidhātr* and other royal officers dependant on him posted there from time to time, let it be known to you that after seeking from the *Vājasaneyā cāraṇa* (of *śukla yajurveda*) *Bhāṇḍāgāra Tulāpadraka*, the villages *Pāśipadraka* along with *Kurapadraka* situated in the *Ōṇi bhoga*, after giving by us in exchange (of *Bhāṇḍāgāra Tulāpadraka* to the lineage of *Bhīmasoma* mentioned later in the epigraph) along with the rights to hidden treasures and deposits, the right to impose fines for the ten offences, and the exemption from being entered by *cāṭas* and *bhaṭas* on the day of full moon of *Māgha*(?), here the maintenance of *Bāleśvara bhāṭṭāraka* penance grove (campus) caused to be constructed by us has been entrusted upon eight images of Śiva, the (images of) *Vigraheśvaras*, (image of) *Gahaneśa* are caused to be established. Sixty-six favourings (named) Rudras come in as time passes by (*yuge yuge parivartamāna*). Now after reaching the Kali age Sri *Lakulīśanātha* as incarnated in the illustrious family or lineage (*Somaśarmākhya brāhmaṇa kule*) of *Somaśarmā* as *Jagadindu*, initiated in the mahāvratā in this sequence then came *Mugalīsa* (*Musalīsa*) also initiated by the same mahāvratā in the tradition of *Soma* and other similar traditions (*pāra ūpara*) came preceptor *Śrī Rudrasoma* followed by his pupil *Śrī Tejasoma* and then his grand-pupil *Śrī Bhīmasoma* (who received the grant) for the sacrificial rituals, initiations, expositions, for free feeding of cereals (*anna-sattra*), repair and maintenance of the dilapidated temples (*deva-kula*) has been entrusted upon illustrious *Bhīmasoma* with the offering of a libation and by means of (this) copper plate charter, for the increase of (religious) merit of his parents (mother and father) and his own self, to be enjoyed as long as the moon, stars and sun will last.

Hans Bakker (Bakker 2000) interprets the inscription as follows:

“Let it be known to you that—after we have earlier asked permission of the *Vājasaneyā* branch (of the white *yajurveda*) and have given a village *Bhāṇḍāgāra Tulāpadraka* in the district of *Oni* in return—this village (scil. *Pāśipadraka*) together with *Kurapadraka*, along with the rights to hidden treasures and deposits, the right to collect all taxes, immunity from all impositions, the right to impose fines for the ten offences, and the exemption from being entered by officials and constables, starting immediately, has been bestowed by us here and now, on the day of full moon of *māgha*(?) with the offering of a libation and by means of (this) copper-plate charter, upon the feet of the illustrious *Bhīmasoma*, for the increase of merit of father, mother and ourselves and to be enjoyed as long as moon, stars and sun will last:

There are eight embodiments of Śiva, the *Vigraheśvaras*; the embodiments of *Gahaneśa* are the sixty-six Rudras who bestow grace (initiation) and who roam about in each *yuga*; now the Kali age has come and *Lakulīśanātha* has descended; he was born in the family of a brahmin named *Somaśarman*; after having been initiated by him (i.e. *Somaśarman*) in the Great Vow he became a moon on earth; and he again (i.e. *Lakulīśa-nātha*) initiated

Mugaliśa; then, in due succession of the lineage that started with Soma, the aforementioned Bhīmasoma—the pupil of the illustrious Tejasoma and grand-pupil of the illustrious guru Rudrasoma—has been justly raised to the position responsible for the protection of the *tapovana* attached to the *Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka* (Temple), which has been erected by ourselves. The donation is made to meet the expenses of ceremonies, initiations, teachings and housing of pupils and grand-pupils and to restore the shrines that have fallen into decay and are in need of repair.”

According to Bakker the name Somaśarman was already known from *Vāyu Purāṇa* and *Linga Purāṇas* and he is evidently the same as Someśa named in the Jayadratha yāmala as *Lakulīśa* predecessor. These *Purāṇs* describe him as the 27th incarnation of Śiva, born in *Prabhāsa tīrtha*, a holy place in Saurashtra near the Arabian Sea, famous for its Somanātha temple. However, the same *Purāṇs* also mention that *Akṣapāda*, *Kumāra*, *Ulūka* and *Vatsa* were Someśa’s pupils, here we do not find the name of *Lakulīśa*. According to *Skanda Purāṇa* Somaśarman was favoured with initiation by *Lakulīśa*. In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is further mentioned that Somaśarman was the first one blessed with *Lakulīśa*’s grace. This clearly distinguishes *Someśa* from *Somaśarmā* as *Someśa* preceded *Lakulīśa* and *Somaśarmā* succeeded him.

Śaivism supplied better ground for the development of *tantras*. Some comparatively late-*Purāṇas* as *Śiva Purāṇa* qualifies the Śaiva schools as following the *Siddhānta mārga* and mentions the *Kālāmukha Śaivas* as *mahāvrtadharas*. The *atimārga* lies between the three non-Śaiva systems and āgamic Śaivism. The *Niśvāsamukha* mentions *atimārga* to be of two kinds (*Dvīprakāraḥ*). The first level of the *atimārga* is that of the *Pañcārthikas*. The rest of the section on the *atimārga* introduces us to a new form of devotion to *Rudra*, which it calls the *Kapālavrata*, the *Lokātītavrata* and the *Mahāpāśupatavrata*. It also refers to those who adopt this observance as the *mahāvratas*. *Niśvāsamukha* is the only text surviving that contains a detailed and systematic account of the practices and doctrine of the *Kapālavratins*.

Mahāvratas has been described as one in which “incarnate souls are subject to the three impurities: *Āṇava Mayīya* and *Karma* but possess the power of knowledge alone. There is no possibility of their also having the power of action. When they have been initiated according to the prescribed procedure all practice the ascetic observance ordained in their scriptures, wearing (ornaments of human) bone at all times, and so attain liberation. When liberated they (still) possess only power of knowledge and that of action. such is the doctrine of *Mahāvratas* (Sanderson 1988, 197-198)⁵”

The text (88c-89) while describing *Lākula* cosmic hierarchy mentions that it consists of eleven levels. On the first (level) is this (lower universe which we call the) Net (*jālam*). On the second level are the Embodiments (*mūrtisaijñakam*) [=the *Śatarudrāḥ*, the five

Ogdoads (*pañcāṣṭakāṇi*), the eight *Devayonis*, the eight Yogas, and the three lines of Gurus (*Gurupaṅktitrayam*). On the third is the bound soul (*paśuḥ*). On the fourth are the bonds (*pāśāḥ*) (=Gahana upto Ananta) and on the fifth are the **Vigrahas**. These are termed as the impure (levels). I have explained the impure cosmos (*aśuddhamārgaḥ*). Hear me now as I teach the pure (*suddhamārgaḥ*). (First is) the Womb (*yonīḥ*), *Vāgīśvarī* from which one is (re)born as *Praṇava* (the second pure level). The third is (that of) *Dhātṛ* and the fourth is (that of) *Dhyāna*. The fifth is *Tejīśa*(’s) and the sixth is *Dhruva*(’s). When he has gained knowledge of all this, from the lowest hell (*Avīci*) (in the Net) upto the world of *Dhruva*, he achieves liberation. In order to enable him to accomplish his goal of sporting (*krīḍārthasiddhaye*) (in ever higher levels of the universe the officiant) should first meditate on the hierarchy of these levels. Then (when he has ...) that hierarchy, he should initiate (him) by means of the word ‘atha’. Initiated through the descent of that word (*athasabdanipātena*) he will cease to be a soul in bondage. Provided that (the initiate) maintains the observances he attains liberation (at death), even if he is a sinner. Of this there is no doubt. I have now explained the *Lokāṭīta*. What else do you wish to know? The goddess replied: I have these eleven levels (*tattvāḥ*) only as names. Explain this matter again in greater detail, O Maheśvara (Sanderson, 1988 164-165).

Thus this translation of the original text shows that there were two universes pure and impure and their hierarchy is as given below:

5. Vigrahas
4. Pāśāḥ (Gahana to Ananta)
3. Paśuḥ
2. Mūrtisamjñakam
1. Jālam

↑ **Aśuddhamārgaḥ** (lowest hell—Avīci)

↓ **Śuddhamārga**

1. Yonīḥ
2. Praṇava
3. Dhātṛ
4. Dhyāna
5. Tejīśa
6. Dhruva

A further advanced and detailed list has been compiled by Sanderson (1988, 200) as Fig. 3. It is as follows:

‘Mausula’—A Lesser Tradition? or A Lesser known Śaiva Tradition

The Pure Universe of the *Lākulas* (*śuddhādhvā*)

Dhruva

Tejśa

Eight Mūrtis (*Vidyēśvaras*)

Eight Vidyās

Eight Pramāṇas (*The Lākula Scriptures*)

Bhasmīśa

Dhyāna

Damaneśvara

Dhātṛ

Praṇava

Yoni Vāgīśvarī

The Impure Universe of the *Lākulas* (*aśuddhādhvā*)

Ṛṣikula

8 *Vigrahas*

Pāśas

Ananta

5 *Abhibhavas* (*Kṣemiśa*, *Brahmaṇodhipati* etc.)

Granthi (Barrier)

Gopati

3 *Mahādevas*

5 *Śiṣyas* and 5 *Ācāryas*

Śivaśankara, *Asādhya*, *Harirudra*, *Daśeśa*

Vigraheśvara

Gahana

Svacchanda (SvT 11.71-73b) mentions that ‘In observance of the *Pāśupatas* the highest attainable level is said to be that of *Īśvara* (the thirty-third *tattva*, and the second in ascent within the pure segment of the universe). In the *Mausula* and *Kāruka* (systems) that limit is within *Māyātattvam* (the highest of the levels of the impure cosmos); for the ultimate goal of their followers is *Kṣemeśa* and *Brahmasvāmi* respectively. For the *Vaimalas* however the goal is *Tejśa*; and for the *Pramāṇa* system it is *Dhruva*. Purified by initiation and by knowledge, and by practicing the *Kapālavrata*, following their discipline until they die, these reach their respective goals. Devoting themselves to the practice of the mantras (*japaḥ*) and to the ash-rites (*bhasma-kriyā*) they go (at death) to the level of *Īśvara*.’

Sanderson mentions that *Niśvāsa* and the *Svacchanda* (the text is identical in the two *tantras*) gives the names of these *Pramāṇa* scriptures, personifying them as a set of eight *Rudras* with the worlds within the *Māyā* level of the *āgamic* cosmos: They are as follows:

1. *Pañcārtha-pramāṇa*
2. *Guhya or Śivaguhya*
3. *Rudrāṅkuśa*
4. *Hṛdaya*
5. *Vyūha*
6. *Lakṣaṇa*
7. *Ākarṣa*
8. *Ādarśa*

Kṣemarāja comments ‘*ete rudrā-etan-nāmaka-pāśupata-sāstr-āvatārakāḥ*’

Translation : These *Rudras* are the propagators (*avatārakāḥ*) of the *Pāśupata-sāstras* which bear these names.

It adds that the fourth of these works, the *Hṛdaya-pramāṇa*, contains six subsidiary *Pramāṇas* which unlike the main *Pramāṇas* are principally concerned with the ritual rather than knowledge. He associates these with the inferior division of the *Pāśupatas* called *Mausula*, saying that its originator Musulendra, a disciple of *Lakulīṣa*, removed these six *pamāṇas* from their proper context in the gnostic *Hṛdaya* and propagated them independently for less advanced practitioners. This, he says, is why they have not been included in the *Svacchanda*’s list. This tradition, that there were really fourteen *Pramāṇasāstras*, divided into eight primary, gnostic texts and six subsidiary texts concerned with ritual, is also seen in the *Jayadrathayāmala*.

The *Rudras* that begin with *Gopati* and end with *Gahana* have been mentioned as *Ghora Rudras*. However, the series from *Gopati* to *Gahana* which is identified as the intermediate *Rudras* (the *Ghoras*) is a well-defined group in the *Niśvāsamukha*’s more detailed version. The *Pāśupatas* aim at their ultimate goal i.e. *Īśvara*. *Kṣemarāja* points out that this applies only to the *Pāśupata* system taught by *Lakulīṣa*, not to that taught by his disciple *Musulendra*.

The *Mausula Hṛdaya-pramāṇa* consisted of six *Pramāṇas* namely the *Purakalpa*, the *Kanaka*, the *Śālā*, the *Niruttara*, the *Viśva*, the *Prapañca*. These were mainly concerned with ritual and were therefore quite different from the eight *Pramāṇas* listed, since the emphasis of the latter was on gnosis. *Svacchanda* mentions that (these six lesser *pramāṇas*) were extracted from the *Hṛdaya-Pramāṇa* by Musulendra, one of *Lakulīṣa*’s disciples, who propagated them as a preliminary teaching for beginners. Of the *Pāśupata* (corpus) therefore we read: ‘‘The canon is held to have two divisions: the *Lākula* and the *Mausula*’’.

‘Mausula’—A Lesser Tradition? or A Lesser known Śaiva Tradition

The portion consisting of cosmological knowledge i.e. *bhuvanādhvā* of the *Niśvāsa* and *Svacchanda* incorporated and extended that of *Lākulas*, preserving the division of the universe into two segments, pure and impure (Sanderson 1988, 199). Both are hierarchically placed the pure above the impure. A standard hierarchy counts 31 domains in the Impure and 5 domains in the Pure one (Bakker, 2000, 2-3). The *Lākulas* and the *Vaimalas* were provided a lower liberation and the *Mausulas* and *Kārukas* further lower than the two mentioned above. This hierarchy within the *atimārga* makes it quite clear that *Lākulas* and *Vaimalas* were higher systems and *Mausulas* and *Kārukas* lower. The worlds that are reported by *Svacchanda* to have been goals of the *Mausulas* and *Kārukas* are those of the *Rudras Kṣemīśa* and *Brahmaṇasvāmī* (SvT 11.71c-72b). In the *Lākula* hierarchy reported by the *Niśvāsamukha* these are located among the five *Abhibhavarudras* and the latter are placed immediately above the world of the *Rudra Gopatin*. Now our text refers to that world as *Granthi*, a term that we know denoted the barrier between the impure and the pure universes in both *Lākula* and *āgamic* systems.

Sanderson mentions that, ‘In the *Lākula* system and probably in the *Vaimala*, though we have no independent evidence of that, a number of levels have been added above the *Abhibhavas*, and the boundary between the two segments has been pushed further up so that the goals of the *Mausulas* and the *Kārukas* are now within the universe of the unliberated’. The *āgamic* accounts contain two further *Dhruvas* at intervals above the *Dhruva* who is the lord of *atimārga*’s highest world, suggesting the possibility that the *bhuvanādhvā* went through further stages of extension before the emergence of the *Mantramārga* system of *Niśvāsa*.

The above discussion clearly states that the hierarchy of the *bhuvanadhva* i.e. the idea of cosmos according to Śaiva scriptures, which consists of the ultimate goals of each *śākhā* or tradition where the followers would reach after being liberated from the cycle of birth and death was created neither by the *Lākulas*, *Vaimalas* nor by the *Mausulas* and *Kārukas*. Rather it was an attempt of the *āgamic* schools to make label these traditions as lesser and hence they placed their ultimate goals not only higher than that of the above mentioned *atimārgic śākhās* but also named made a further division in the universe-the pure and impure. While they placed their own goals in the pure universe, they placed those of the so called inferior traditions (according to them) in the impure universe. Within the lesser traditions too we find that the *Lākulas* and the *Vaimalas* are placed higher than the *Mausulas* and *Kārukas* which ultimately led the present author to opt for this title ‘*Mausula* A lesser tradition? or a lesser known Śaiva tradition’. The question still remains unsolved as the *Mausulas* would not have labeled their own tradition as a lesser one it was the attempt of the so called higher traditions to place the ‘others’ lower in the hierarchy and make them ‘lesser’. This labeling into higher and lower though has been mentioned as based on the hierarchy of the ultimate goals as we have discussed above but that hierarchy

was a creation of the superiors to make the rest inferior. Then was this labeling done on the basis of observances of rituals and rites, practices of the followers, their knowledge of scriptures or was on the basis of the region I which they were propagated, practiced and developed. In that case the mention of the *Mausulas* is only found in the Junwani copper plate inscription and the two texts mentioned in course of our discussion. The texts do not provide any information on the geographical context. Its mention in the Junwani copper plate inscription shows that it developed in an area of relative isolation i.e. *Dakṣiṇa Kosala*. Secondly, the teachings were based on the fourth *pramāṇa* text i.e. *Hṛdaya-Pramāṇa*. It is mentioned that the founder of this tradition *Musala* or *Musalendra* extracted portions of this text and added six more to it and this tradition has been so designed that it is for beginners. Probably the second factor is an indicator why the *Mausulas* have been placed in a lower position in the hierarchical list. Its absence in the other scriptures and presence in the *Svacchanda* and *Niśvāsa* makes it clear that it was a lesser known or rather lesser recognized tradition but not an unknown tradition that could be completely ignored by the composer of the religious scriptures.

Here we would like to mention that a recent copper inscription from Sirpur of the reign of *Mahāśīva Tivara* a predecessor of *Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna* (regnal yr. 7) of the *Pāṇḍuvarṇśin* dynasty, mentions a *brāhmaṇa* named *Mashidev-opādhyāya* as the recipient of the grant (Singh P.K, 2009). The genealogy of the *Pāṇḍuvarṇśins* as reflected from the epigraphic sources runs as follows:

Udayana

Indrabala

Nanna.....*Īśānadeva*.....*Bhavadeva Raṇakesarī*

Tivaradeva.....*Chandragupta*

Nanna

Harṣagupta=*Vāsaṭā*

Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna

Musalīśa as mentioned in the Junwani copper plate cannot be a direct disciple of *Lakulīśa* himself as the Mathura inscription clearly indicates an early date for *Lakulīśa* sometime around 2nd century CE if not earlier. In that case here there is a gap of three generations from the last disciple *Bhīmasoma* (in between we have *Rudrasoma* and *Tejasoma*) this leads one to place *Musalīśa* in the 6th-7th century CE. The name *Masi* and the following *upādhyāya* which probably reflects his status of a teacher tempts one to identify him with *Musala* or *Musalendra* who propounded the *Mausula* tradition. The time gap between *Tivaradeva* and *Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna* also would allow us to safely place the rest mentioned in the Junwani copper plate in between *Musalīśa* and *Bhīmasoma*. Though, it is a fact that the name mentioned here is *Muṣideva* and not *Muṣudeva* as it should have been and neither is this evidence strong enough for such inferences.

‘Mausula’—A Lesser Tradition? or A Lesser known Śaiva Tradition

The inscription not only mentions the names of two ultimate goals of the *Mausulas* the *Vigraheśa* and *Gahaneśa* but also entrusts the maintenance i.e. well being of the *tapovana* on them. Probably this is a reference to the establishment of the images of these two *Rudras* as models for teachings or expositions (*vyākhyāna*). It also mentions the term ‘*aṣṭau*’ which stands for eight (*murttis* of *Śiva*). Here, it is worth mentioning that Kṣemarāja observes that the *Mātaṅgaśāstra* situates *Vigraheśana* in the *madhyapūṭa* who is surrounded by eight *Rudras*: *Śarva*, *Bhava*, *Ugra*, *Bhīma*, *Bhasman*, *Antaka*, *Dundubhi* and *Śrīvatsa*. The *Niśvāsamukha* places *Vigraheśa* immediately above *Gahana*. Thus the inscription under consideration is the only one from this region which not only bears allusion to the presence of *Mausulas* here but also provides information about their knowledge of cosmos and probably the creation of a model of the universe which they would acquire as their ultimate goal.⁶ What can be concluded beyond doubt is that the lineage propounded by *Musalīśa* was considered inferior by others and hence the *Pramāṇa* (*Hṛdaya Pramāṇa*) chosen by him for the purpose of propagation was also considered as lesser in hierarchy and was either mentioned as lower in status or often excluded in the list of *Pramāṇas* mentioned in the religious scriptures.

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Notes

1. *Musala* has several meanings, like one with a club, Name of a son of *Viśvāmitra* etc.
2. For details on the translation of *Niśvāsamukha's* explanation of *atimārga* see pp. 165.
3. Also quoted by Jayaratha, *Tantraloka* 1.34 (I, 70): '*mausule kārūke caiva māyā-tattavam prakīrtitam*'.
4. Sanderson (op.cit.) has based his paper mostly on the *Niśvāsasamhitā* one of the 18 *Rudratāntras* survives in a single palm-leaf manuscript preserved in the Nepalese National Archives in Kathmandu datable to c. second half of the 9th century CE.
5. Translation of excerpt from *Sivaratnākara* of Basavaraja, king of Keladi 9.6.92c-95c) after Sanderson.
6. The above assumption has been made on the ground that the inscription mentions about the *tapovana* and the students their upkeep and teaching.

Acknowledgement

This paper is based on Alexis Sanderson's article 'The Lākulas : New Evidence of a system intermediate between Pañcārthika Pasupatism and Āgamic Śaivism' and his translation of excerpts from the *Niśvāsamukha* and *Svacchanda Tantra* in the above mentioned article. Only the reading and interpretation of the Junwani Copper plate is mine which is done in the light of Sanderson's & Bakker's work on the Lākulas. I would also like to thank Mr. Rahul Singh for allowing me to examine the Junwani Copper plate.

A Note on the Munger Sadāśiva (?) Image Inscription of Year 3 of King Bhagīratha

RAJAT SANYAL

The inscription that forms the subject matter of this brief note was noticed at the city of Munger, the headquarters of the district of the same name in southern Bihar during a fieldwork in the season of 2003-04. Munger has been one of the major epigraphic sites of early medieval eastern India. It formed one of the most important and early administrative headquarters (*jayaskandhāvāra*) named Mudgagiri, under the dominion of the Pāla kings of Bengal-Bihar (Sircar 1982:71).¹ A number of inscribed copperplates and stone images of the Pāla dynasty are known to have hailed either from Munger proper or villages in its immediate neighbourhood within the district (Sircar 1982, 1983).²

The inscription is now placed on the open corridor of the temple of the goddess Kāṣṭha-harīnī (*Kaṣṭahārīnī*) right on the bank of the Ganga at the centre of the city (Plate 1). Within the temple complex one comes across two separate clusters of sculptures and architectural members, gathered obviously from the neighbourhood and collected here for regular worship. The image with the present inscription forms part of the second assemblage located on the open corridor of the sanctum (Plate 2). Here on the northern plinth of the temple are found a few specimens of “Pāla-Sena” art in stone datable to the eleventh-twelfth century: a fragmented upper part of an image of the snake goddess as gleaned from the surviving snake-hood canopy, two fragments of a highly decorated stone pillar and a door-lintel containing a sculptured panel that shows the mutilated standing figures of either the incarnations of Viṣṇu or the set of astral deities called *Dikpālas*, of which only five are extant. Stepping right up onto the floor of the corridor behind this cluster is a member in stone, composed of two separate segments. The lowermost segment, partially plastered, is a square stone block (40.6×40.6×5 cm) that contains on its northern face the inscription under review. Above this stone block is placed another massive (56.4 cm high) hexagonal block with a square base and topped by two gradually receding hexagons having an extended base. It appears at one glance that the entire composition represents a monolithic unit, but a careful scrutiny will lead one to detect that the lower and the upper stone blocks form two separate units that have been placed together vertically. On the eastern and northern hands of the hexagon are carved two seated male figures, identical in form and size. The icons are irretrievably defaced to such an extent that none of the iconographic features are distinguishable. Therefore, it has not been possible to identify the images with any amount of certainty. However, from the sitting position in *padmāsana* with hands placed in “varada in bhūmisparśa style” on either side of the lap as well as from the context of the epigraph written under it—as it will be shown shortly—it is quite

probable that both the images represent Sadāśiva. It needs to be reiterated at the same time that this identification remains perfunctory owing to the reason stated above.

The overall well preserved text of the inscription covers an area of approximately 28cm containing four neatly engraved lines. The last four letters of the third line and a few initial letters of the last have been covered by modern plaster and cannot be read. Although the inscription cannot be dated in terms of direct calendrical year, the excellent palaeography, showing 'Mature Siddhamātrkā' script of eastern variety of c. ninth century CE, leaves hardly any doubt about its date somewhere in the ninth or early tenth century. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit and the composition represents a mixed idiom involving verse and prose. The first four sentences covering the first three lines are in verse (in Anuṣṭubh metre), while the last line representing the date in terms of regnal year is in prose. The letters are identical with many of the contemporary epigraphic records of eastern India. The uniformity in the application of individual letter forms like 'la', 'ma', 'na', 'ja' and the care taken by the engraver in distinguishing nearly-identical forms like 'pa' and 'ya' or 'sa' and 'ma' are really striking. The original text of the inscription and a partially corrected version of the same are presented in the following (Plate 3).

Text

- Line 1.* Symbol [siddham] [||] namaḥ śūlabhr̥te tasmai muktā-śubhr̥=ābhra-nimnagā jaṭā sulalitā yasya māl̥ati-māl̥ikāyate || [1] mukuṭeśvara-var̥ṣe abhūta kulanand=īti
- Line 2.* viśrutaḥ sa sutaṁ janayāmāsa nāmnā vijaya-nandinam || [2] dhatrī-tidhākā-jātas=tanayo nayavit-tataḥ dvit̥y-ārundhatī-vāsid-asyā-
- Line 3.* jñeti-prājā-priyā-satasyām=ālam̥am labhe gopālita-kramam || [3] bhagīratha-nṛpasya yaḥ pādāmbharuḥa-dharmadaḥ nyāy-ādhigate-vitta-nata-na...(?)
- Line 4.* ...sadmedam̥ kār̥itam̥ gumphā pita puṇyāya cātmanah || [4] samvat 3[||]

Partially Corrected Text

- Line 1.* Symbol [siddham] [||] namaḥ śūlabhr̥te tasmai muktā-śubhr̥=ābhra-nimnagā jaṭā sulalitā yasya māl̥ati-māl̥ikāyate ||[I] mukuṭeśvara-var̥ṣe (a)bhūt kulanand=īti
- Line 2.* viśrutaḥ sa sutaṁ janayāmāsa nāmnā vijaya-nandinam ||[2] dhatrī-tidhākā-jātas=tanayo nayavit-tataḥ dvit̥y-ārundhatī-vāsid-asyā-
- Line 3.* jñeti-prājā-priyā-satasyām=ātmajam̥ (?) labhe gopālita-kramam̥ ||[3] bhagīratha-nṛpasya yaḥ pādāmbharuḥa-dharmadaḥ nyāy-ādhigate-vitta-nata-na...(?)
- Line 4.* ...sadmedam̥ kār̥itam̥ gumphā pituḥ puṇyāya cātmanah ||[4] samvat 3[||]

The inscription contains many crucially significant sets of information, but at the same time a number of issues connected with it remain unresolved. The inscription starts with the usual auspicious *siddham* symbol followed by the first dedicatory verse. The first verse

A note on the Munger Sadāśiva (?) Image Inscription of year 3 of King Bhagīratha

may be translated as: “adoration to the possessor of the trident (*Śūlabhṛta*, i.e. Śiva), whose rippling matt/coiled hair shining as pearl-like white cloud, (takes the shape of) beautiful garland of *mālati* (flowers).” The second verse gives a narrative account of the genealogy, of a Kāyastha named Vijayanandin. It may be translated as: “In the lineage of Mukuṭeśvara was born the famous Kulanandin whose son was popular as Vijayanandin.” The third verse, written in a very complicated manner, has not been possible to decode completely. It starts with the name of a nurse (*dhatrī*) named Tidhākā, whose son, conversant in the fields of law and polity (*nayavittataḥ*), was possibly married to a lady named Ājñā who has been compared, by virtue of her chastity, with Arundhati, the consort of the sage Vaśiṣṭha, the son of this lady (i.e. *Ājñā*) by the son of the nurse is possibly stated to have ruled the earth for long time (*gopālita-kramam*). The fourth verse writes that from the lotus feet of the pious king named Bhagīratha was donated the sum for the conversion of a cave (*gumphā*) to the abode (*sadma*) (of the god), for the increase of religious merit of his father and himself. The last line gives the date as regnal year (*samvat*) 3.

The inscription, thus, throws a number of puzzling questions. Firstly, the relation between the king Bhagīratha, the donor of the record, and the Kāyastha family is far from understandable. So is that of the son of the nurse and the king. The three sentences seem to inform about three different families that cannot be immediately interconnected. Secondly, the identity of the king Bhagīratha is a major problem. No ruler of this name is so far known to have ruled in southern Bihar in the ninth-tenth century CE. Possibly he was a local ruler of southern Bihar, ruling under the authority of his contemporary Pāla king, although nothing on that score can be said confidently. Finally, the date of this inscription is a major problem. Nothing in the epigraph is stated clearly about the reckoning in terms of which this *samvat* 3 can be justified. The only known system of reckoning followed in early medieval south Bihar region is the *Lakṣmaṇasena samvat* that initiated in 1162 CE (Sircar 1965:272). But the palaeography of the inscription, thoroughly showing the systemic features of the Mature Siddhamātrkā script, have hardly any resemblance with the later Gauḍī script of twelfth-thirteenth centuries in which the inscriptions with the date in the *Lakṣmaṇasena samvat* are found. Further studies are expected to yield more substantial historical information from this unique and very important dedicatory inscription.

Acknowledgement

I shall remain indebted to Dr Gauriswar Bhattacharya and Professor Debarchana Sarkar for their unstinted help and suggestions without which this paper would not have been possible. Grateful thanks are due to Dr R. K. Chattopadhyay for drawing my attention to this interesting piece of record during the field season of 2003-04. Special thanks are also due to Sri Asim Das, for digitally modifying the photograph (cited here as plate 1) that greatly helped in reading.

Endnotes

1. It was known earlier from Munger copperplate inscription of Devapāla that region formed a royal administrative headquarters, called Mudgagiri, of the Pala dynasty. With the decipherment of the Karnasuvarna plate of the time of Dharmapāla, issued from the same Mudgagiri (Bhattacharya 2008), it can now be said that Mudgagiri became politically prominent from the early decades of Pāla rule in Bihar.
2. Apart from the copperplate inscription of the time of Devapāla, a number of dedicatory stone inscriptions dated in the ruling years of other Pāla king and found from the villages of Valgudar, Rajauna, Jaynagar, Nongarh, Uren and Lai in the former Munger district (currently in the district of Lakhisarai), also testify to the historical geographical significance of the Munger region in the history of early medieval eastern India under Pāla dominion.

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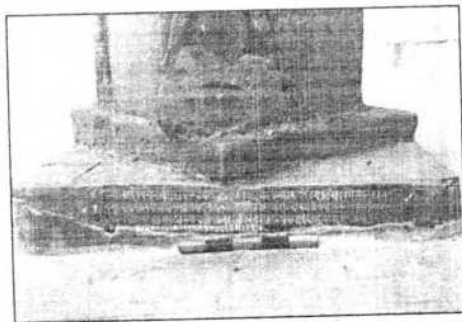


Plate 1 : The images of Sadāśiva on the pillar with the inscription at the base

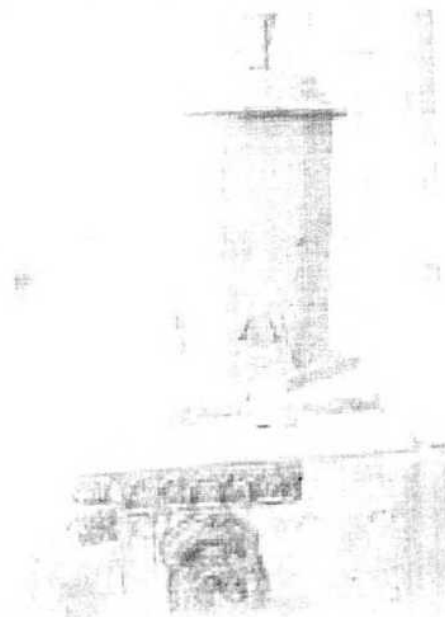


Plate 2 : The cluster of sculptures showing the location of the inscription

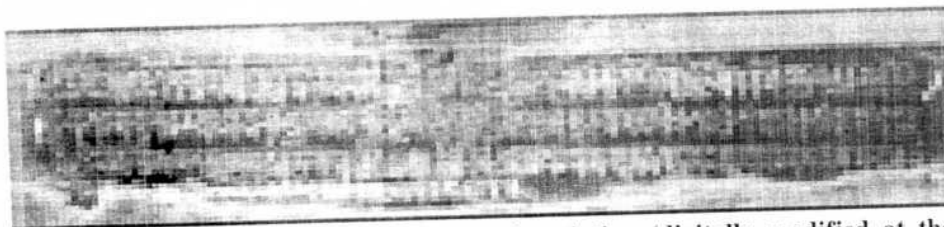


Plate 3 : Details of the Munger Sadāśiva image inscription (digitally modified at the centre)

The Śāntyāgārika Brāhmanas of the land grant charters of early Bengal

SAYANTANI PAL

Land grant charters from early Bengal (including the present state of West Bengal in India and the country of Bangladesh) belonging to a period between the fifth to the early part of the thirteenth century C.E. have come to light. They record the grant of land mainly by the ruling families and other wealthy people to the brāhmanas and the religious institutions. Naturally this long period of eight centuries saw many changes in the social status, professional qualifications and requirements of the recipient brāhmanas. In the beginning (5th–6th centuries) these recipients used to be ordinary village brāhmanas and the purposes of the grants were to help them to perform their daily religious rites or to settle down in a village by providing only the required amount of land. But gradually there was a change in this attitude. Local and regional powers were gradually gaining importance in early medieval India. In order to legitimize their power and proclaim themselves as rulers to the subjects, they needed the brāhmanas. In this situation land donation to brāhmanas assumed a greater significance. In the eighth century a systematic and regular government was established under the Pālas in south Bihar and the northern part of Bengal. On the other hand the Candras established their rule in the eastern, central and southern parts of Bangladesh in the beginning of the tenth century. In their charters as well as those of the Varmans and Senas, one or more villages were granted to the recipients together with other privileges. In return the rulers expected legitimization from the priestly class. The charters concerned show that many brāhmanas obtained royal posts and appropriate titles along with them from the eighth century onwards. The king used to grant them lands as fees for officiating at sacrifices performed by them or on auspicious occasions. The śāntivārikas or śāntyāgārikas were one such category of brāhmanas. Some of these charters concerned provide a glimpse to how they stood apart from their fellow brāhmanas and formed a distinct category.

Two copper plates of Gopāla II (Furui 2009) of the ninth century refer to grant of land to this group of brāhmanas. Plate 1 refers to the recipient bhaṭṭaputra Līlākara, a śāntivārika attached to śāntigrha, the son of bhaṭṭa Yaśaskara and the grandson of bhaṭṭa Dinakara. His family originated from Campā and he lived in Samudrāndālī. In the second plate the donee is again bhaṭṭaputra Atthakara, a śāntivārika attached to śāntigrha, the son of bhaṭṭa purohita Śāntikara and the grandson of bhaṭṭa Yaśaskara. He belonged to the same Vedic school, gotra and pravara as that in plate 1. His family originated from Campā and he lived in Samudroccālī which according to Furui is the same as Samudrāndālī of the first plate. He further suggests that the donees of both plates could have belonged

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to the same family and Līlākara, the donee of plate 1 and the son of Yaśaskara, is the uncle of Atthakara, the donee of plate 2, who is the son of Śāntikara and the grandson of Yaśaskara. The location of the donated lands, as Furuī suggests, was North Bengal. Thus here we have the evidence of a brāhmana family migrating from Campā to North Bengal and the new generation of this family evidently succeeded in securing a firm position by occupying the post of śāntivārikas under the Pālas.

In the Rampal (Majumdar 1929:1-9) and the Dhulla copper plates of Śrīcandra (Majumdar 1929: 165-6, Sircar 1959-60) ruling in the middle of the tenth century, lands were granted to two śāntivārikas / śāntyagārādhikṛtas as fees for officiating at the sacrifices called Koṭihoma and Adbhutaśānti. Among them the gift land was in a single plot in case of the first recipient but in the second case the recipient obtained 19 halas and 6 droṇas land in five plots situated in five different villages. Though it is not possible to locate the place of land grant exactly it may be said that they were situated in the Dhaka region. It is thus clear that the śāntyāgārika brāhmanas were important and amongst one of the favored class of the rulers.

In the charters of the two kings of the Varman dynasty ruling in Vaṅga in the middle of the eleventh century the śāntivārikas and the śāntyagārādhikṛtas again appear as the recipients of land grants. In the Samantasara copper plate of Harivarman (Bhattacharya 1953-54) cultivable land (halabhūmi) amounting to 86 droṇas was granted to a śāntivārika and in the Belava plate of Bhojavarman (Basak 1913-14, Majumdar 1929) a plot of land with betel nut and other trees was granted to a śāntyagārādhikṛta. His great grandfather came from Madhyadeśa and later they settled in a village of Uttara Rāḍha. Thus here we have another evidence of a śāntivārika and a śāntyagārādhikṛta of a migrant brāhmana family.

In the Sundarban (Majumdar 1929) and the Madhainagar copper plates (Majumdar 1929, Randle 1941-42, 1985, Sircar 1981: 124-30) of the Sena king Lakṣmaṇasena ruling in the fourth quarter of the twelfth century the śāntyāgārikas again appear as the recipients of land grant from the king. In the first charter a plot of land yielding a rent of 50 purāṇas annually was granted to the śāntyāgārika Kṛṣṇadharadevaśarmman while in the second charter a locality called Dāpaṇīya pāṭaka yielding a rent of 100 purāṇas and 68 kapardakas annually was granted to the śāntyāgārika Govindadevaśarmman on the occasion of Aindrī Mahāśānti. Land granted in the first charter was situated in the Khāḍi maṇḍala of Pauṇḍravardhanabhukti. The Citāḍi canal mentioned in the charter as situated on its boundary has been identified with the canal of the same name in the Khāḍi pargana of present Diamond harbor (Majumdar 1929). Land granted in the second charter was in the Varendra region, i.e., in North Bengal.

From the above data it is clear that in the matter of obtaining royal favour the brāhmanas holding this particular title excelled the other brāhmanas and this is applicable not only in the eastern and southern part but also in the northern part of Bengal.

Let us now analyze this particular title. In the two charters of the Candras under consideration the title appears as 'śāntivārika'. Unfortunately the Sundarban copper plate of Lakṣmaṇasena is lost. According to the reading of N.G. Majumdar the term is 'śāntyāgārika' and the case is the same in the Madhainagar grant also (Majumdar 1929). The reading 'śāntyāgārādhikṛta' is, however, clear in the Belava plate (Majumdar 1929). Thus we get three variant readings of the term, viz., śāntivārika, śāntyāgārika and śāntyāgārādhikṛta. According to R.G. Basak, śāntyāgāra was the house to bathe with the propitiatory water after a sacrifice and its in charge was the śāntyāgārādhikṛta (Basak 1913-14). D.C. Sircar suggests that śāntivārika was the priest in charge of the performer of propitiatory rites (Sircar 1966: 299).

From the two plates of Gopāla 11 (Furui 2009) as well as the Madhainagar (Majumdar 1929) and the Belava plates (Majumdar 1929) it is clear that the title of śāntivārika and śāntyāgārādhikṛta could not be obtained hereditarily. In these charters their, predecessors are not seen as holding this title. Some professional qualification was obviously essential.

Thus it is apparent that the brāhmanas holding this post played an important role during the sacrifices and thus they became important to the rulers supporting such brahmanical rites. It may, however, be pointed out that the Pālas and the Candras who used Dharmacakra seal on the copper plate charters gradually came under the influence of the Brahmanical religion. Some of their rulers even adopted Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. The manner in which the śāntivārikas obtained their favour indicates that brahmanical sacrifices were regularly performed at their court.

That the royal favour obtained by the śāntyāgārikas gradually led them to spatial proximity is indicated by the Sundarban copper plate of Lakṣmaṇasena (Majumdar 1929). In this charter a plot of land within a village granted to śāntyāgārika Kṛṣṇadharadevaśarmman was bounded on three sides by lands belonging to another four śāntyāgārikas. Among them the land to the north was the property of two śāntyāgārikas but the other two plots on two sides were śāsanas, i.e., granted lands possessed by two other śāntyāgārikas. [To its east was the śāšana of śāntyāgārika Prabhāsa, to its west was the śāšana of śāntyāgārika Rāmadeva, to its north were the two plots of land (bhūmi) of another two śāntyāgārikas]. Thus here we have a cluster of lands belonging to some śāntyāgārikas. The growing importance of their profession led towards the formation of a distinct group, apparently distinguished and affluent, among the brāhmanas.

It has been observed that a new type of differentiation arose from the Gupta period on the basis of the possession of land and acquisition of power in the management of village affairs. In the inscriptions of early Bengal the brāhmanas often appear as mahattaras and kuṭumbins who have been regarded as the wealthy and influential class of villagers. As among the peasants, stratification among the brāhmanas and emergence of well-to-do categories may be noticed and this could have resulted in internal differentiation among

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them. In this study the manner in which 5 śāntyāgārikas appear as plot-owners in the same place indicates their urge to spatial proximity with their colleagues, which was again recognized by the State. This domineering presence of this particular brāhmana group, would certainly have a bearing in defining the social character of this rural settlement. In the absence of any active role of the village community like the grāmāṣṭkūlādhikaraṇa of the earlier period important rural issues like purchase of land might have been decided by them. However, as the grantees in this case were supposed to be devoted to religious and academic pursuits, how far the holdings of this particular group became a stable base of political power cannot be determined. This favour and recognition from the ruling class, the privileges attached to land grants (most of which were incomes from different sources) together with traditional socio-economic privileges must have elevated some brāhmanas to a nodal position in the contemporary system of land holding and among them were definitely the śāntyāgārikas, as is revealed by this study.

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Another Image of the Sun God with Planetary Deities from South-Western Bengal

SHARMILA SAHA

The genesis of the celebrated “Pāla-Sena” or the “Eastern Indian” school of art in early medieval eastern India between the eighth and the twelfth centuries CE have been studied from variegated iconographic and art historical points of view since more than a century. It is now generally accepted that the establishment of the eastern school in the post-Gupta period contributed greatly to the growth and spread of new aesthetic idioms, though not completely out of the line of evolution of artistic activities of south Asia towards the close of the early historical period. This tradition initiated with comparatively lesser number of iconic specimens—as the available volume of material evidence would suggest—and gradually proclaimed its own identity, the final manifestation of the exuberance of the genre being demonstrated in the large number of iconic representations of the tenth-twelfth centuries (Banerji 1933, Huntington 1984, Kramrisch 1994).

One of the major iconographic features characterizing a substantial number of sculptures of early medieval eastern India is the accommodation of specific classes of subsidiary celestial figures in association with a major central cult deity of either the Brahmanic, Buddhist or Jaina pantheon. A considerable segment of such sculptural pieces of eastern and northeastern India represent a class of subsidiary figures usually referred to with such generic terms as “planetary deities”/ “astral deities”/ “deities of time and space” and the first of three above classes is more commonly known as *graha-s*. Recent literature on the representation of planetary deities on stone sculptures of Jain and Brahmanical pantheons from eastern India is almost exclusively based on the extensive survey of such specimens of the Pāla-Sena era by Gerd J.R. Mevissen who has prepared, in the light of intensive studies, two corpuses on the iconic expressions of the *graha-s* as subsidiary figure to a class of Jain gods and goddesses and one member of the five major Brhmanical cults, the sun god (Mevissen 2006). The present paper concentrates on another yet unnoticed fascinating example of the second category.

* * *

Kakrajit is a large village located about 10km northeast of present Dantan, within the Police Station of the same name, in the district of Paschim [West] Medinipur in West Bengal (Figure 1). The village is quite popular in the neighbouring territory in having a medieval temple of Jagannātha where thousands of devotees pay visit every year during the time of the annual chariot festival of the deity. The Kakrajit temple represents one of the commonest architectural styles of late medieval Bengal architecture—the flat-roofed

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(*dālān*) style. A survey of monuments and artefacts of archaeological interest in the village reveals that apart from the Jagannātha temple, there are several other classes of evidences that abound in the village. Of special significance, other than the Sūrya image forming the subject of the present essay is a cluster of fragmented sculptural pieces in black stone and laterite collected from a large tank in the vicinity and gathered and actively worshipped under a tree (Plate 1). Fragmented upper parts of one Viṣṇu and another Sūrya image can be easily identified here. Of special iconographic significance is another stone sculpture placed under a tree at the centre of the village in front of a modern Siva temple. The badly damaged sculpture can be identified with the figure of Revanta riding horse (Plate 2). Unlike the so far reported images of the deity from Bengal where the figure in relief faces left (Mevisssen 2006, Haque 1992, Banerjea 1956), here the figure in round faces front on a horse. Attributes in the two hands cannot be seen, for both the hands are broken below the elbow. However, the right hand possibly holds a whip, the terminal thread of which exists only. The god is bejewelled with necklace, pelleted armlet, the sacred thread and the waist girdle. The rectangular back slab is designed in the form of a *pañca-ratha* lintel terminating in the form of trefoil arch above the conical (partially broken) crown of the deity. A couple of full-blown lotuses are prominent on either side of the face, besides the two flying Vidyādhara-s above two rampant horses and a central *kīrttimukha* at the top centre. The two attendants Daṇḍin and Piṅgala in usually *ābhaṅga* pose are seen respectively to the left and right of the principal figure. The *tri-ratha* pedestal is divided into three vertical registers and two hunters with bow and arrow, possibly his companions of “the sport of hunting”, are carved in low relief covering the upper two registers of the terminal *rathas*.¹ The rectangular back slab, the plain carving of the pedestal with figural representations in low relief and the rather simplistic depiction of the principal and auxiliary figures indicate a date not later than the late-tenth or early-eleventh century CE.

Apart from the architectural and sculptural materials, the entire village possesses occasional habitation patches in form of pottery scatters, with one extensive occupation area in and around a badly damaged mound (Plate 3). Although most of the materials lie in secondary contexts and the surface of the mound itself represents extensive re-depositional activities, it appears from a preliminary study of the pottery types in red/orange, buff, black and grey wares that the village formed part of a major settlement area of the early medieval period. The entire set of observation made above was meant to bring home the point that the potential of the area as an early medieval site is unquestionable. With this background one may now consider the sculptural specimen that forms the principal agenda of this paper.

Even a cursory look into the sanctum of the temple of Jagannātha at Kakrajit will immediately attract one’s attention towards, apart from the principal Jagannātha triad, a well preserved large image (82.8x44.9x15.3cm) of grayish black stone. At a closer scrutiny

it can be easily identified as an image of the Sun god (Plate 4). The principal figure in round (54.4cm) stands in *samapādashānaka* with his usual boots. He wears *karṇa-kunḍala-s* (circular earring), *kaṇṭha-hāra* (necklace), *hāra* (chain), *upavīta* (the sacred thread), *vanamālā* (long garland) and *abhyāṅga*. (waist girdle). The slim wavy movement of the *uttariya* (the upper garment) is quite well-executed. His head is crowned with a *kirīta-mukuṭa* (conical cap) having a delicately designed pelleted base that covers his forehead. He puts on bracelets and armlets in the hands that hold the long stalks of two full-blown lotuses that rise up to the level of his face on either side. The circular back slab contains all the usual figural elements in the form of the central *kīrttimukha* at the top, the two flying Vidyādhara-s on either side, the attendants Daṇḍin and Piṅgala by the two sides of his legs, his consort Mahāśvetā standing at his feet along the sagittal line and the charioteer Aruṇa right on the base of the *tri-ratha* pedestal at the centre in front of Mahāśvetā. A devotee sits with folded legs in *añjali-mudrā* close to Piṅgala on the right side. The smoothly carved *tri-ratha* pedestal is broadly divided into two registers with the lower one showing the seven horses that drive his chariot; the comparatively thin upper register is divided by a sharp line into two vertical segments of which the lower one is carved with a horizontal frieze of serrated triangular geometric motif.

Let us now consider the most significant set of iconic representations in the whole composition accommodated in a vertical alignment on the stele along the two sides of the principal figures (Plate 5). The set is composed of eight figures, four on either sides, of the well-known planetary deities or *grahas*.² All the small figures sit on lotus pedestals with the following iconographic features (Plate 6):

- a. Candra : Candra is seen seated at the top right side of Sūrya, holding an urn of nectar in the left hand and an unidentified object in the right hand.
- b. Maṅgala : Maṅgala has a staff (sword) in his right hand and a curved object in the left. He is seated to the upper left side of Sūrya.
- c. Budha : Budha holds a sword in the right hand, while the left is absolutely guarded by the right hand of Sūrya.
- d. Brhaspati : The pot bellied figure of Brhaspati is seen holding a book in the right hand and a small vase in the left.
- e. Śukra : The attributes in both hands of Śukra are not visible clearly.
- f. Śani : Śani holds a water vessel in his left hand while the right hand probably holds a staff with a circular top.
- g. Rāhu : The fierce looking Rāhu is shown only up to the breast with a grinning face, round protruding eyes, hair tied up in a bunch of spiral coils rising upwards holding a crescent moon in the right hand, while the left hand holds a circular object.

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- h. Ketu is shown seated holding a sword in the right hand and a shield in the left. A snake hood acts as a canopy behind the head of Ketu.

* * *

Extant literature on the iconography of subsidiary *graha* figures on images of Sūrya from eastern India shows the existence of altogether fourteen (named “G1” to “G14”) differential patterns of composite representations of the planetary deities, depending on their locational status on the back slab of the main deity (Mevisse 2006). Such varying compositions are also found on images of other Brahmanical deities like Viṣṇu and many of the gods and goddesses of Jaina pantheon (Mevisse 2000, 2008, 2009). But, if these varying patterns are clustered in terms of the number of *graha*-s (which is either eight or nine) and the posture of the principal and the subsidiary figures, a set of seven differential configurations of this class of images appears (Figure 2). The present Sūrya image conforms constitutionally to the model “G6” of Mevisse’s classificatory scheme and forms the second (clockwise) variety of composition where eight seated *graha*-s surround the central Sūrya image (cf. Figure 2).

The final issue centres round the date of the Kakrajit Surya image. The following technical and idiomatic characters of this art specimen will lead one to put it, as illustrated below somewhere in the first half of the tenth century. First and foremost, the shape of the back slab is a fair marker of the date. From the ninth to twelfth century, a unilateral evolutionary development, from the simple circular halo round the head of the central figure to a sharply conical back slab, can be visualized. The intermediate stages between the early tenth and the mid-eleventh centuries are represented initially by featureless squarish element, followed by the oblong/semicircular back slab. The present image falls, on that score, on the midway between the early (ninth century) and the late (eleventh-twelfth century) phases represented by the square stele. Second, from around the late tenth century, the stele of the icons become highly ornamented with decorative elements like stylized zoomorphic (mostly in the form of the well-known *gaja-śārdula* motif) and anthropomorphic (like drummers, musicians and increasing number of celestial figures) components as well as an overemphasis on abstracts floral designs. The present image shows only the figures of the *aṣṭagraha*-s and the two garland-bearers on the back slab, besides the central *kīrttimukha*. Third, the *kīrttimukha* that develops from only the late ninth/early tenth century is initially represented by an abstract floral construct that gradually elaborates into a highly decorated and stylized lion faced element. Fourth, the pedestal of the image is *tri-ratha*, unlike the earlier flat pedestal of the ninth century or the later *pañca-ratha/sapta-ratha* pedestals of the eleventh-twelfth centuries. Finally, the Kakrajit figure represents a balanced amalgamation of an aesthetic treatment that reflects a transition from the overarching urge of the ninth century artist towards execution of

heavily soft fleshy countenance to a process of artistic hardening. The robust and thick-set bodily proportions coupled with the overall flat appearance of the physique and the face also conform to the intermediate early tenth century tradition of image building in eastern India. Thus, the Kakrajit Sūrya is yet another addition to the existing corpus of Sun images with the figures of eight subsidiary *graha* figures from Bengal.

Acknowledgements

Special words of thanks are due to Siharan Nandi, Photographer, State Archaeological Museum (Kolkata) for digitally editing the image used here as Plate 4. Photographs were taken by Rajat Sanyal.

Endnotes

1. The over all depiction seems to be quite in keeping with the textual prescriptions regarding the execution of icons of Revanta. As J.N. Banerjea observes (Banerjea 1956:442):
The *Bṛhatsamhitā* lays down that 'Revanta riding on horse back is (shown) engaged with his companions in the sport of hunting...the *Viṣṇudharmottara* simply says that 'the Lord Revanta should be like Sūrya, (and) on the back of a horse.'
2. Gerd J. R. Mevissen (Mevissen 2006:1) gives the traditional list of the nine planetary deities (*navagraha-s*), as "Sūrva (Sun), Candra (Moon). Maṅgala or Aṅgākara (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Bṛhaspati or Guru (Jupiter), Śukra (Venus), Śani or Śaniścara (Saturn), Rāhu (demon causing eclipses. node of the moon) and Ketu (comet. meteor). These *navagraha* figures, appearing first on the Jaina images of eastern and central India, possibly finds the earliest textual reference in a segment of the *Aparājitapṛcchā* where they have been equated with the nine purusa-s (Shah 1975). Mevissen observes that the text possibly "refers to the nine *Mahāpuruṣa-s* (nine *Vāsudeva-s* etc.) of Jaina mythology (Mevissen 2000:343).

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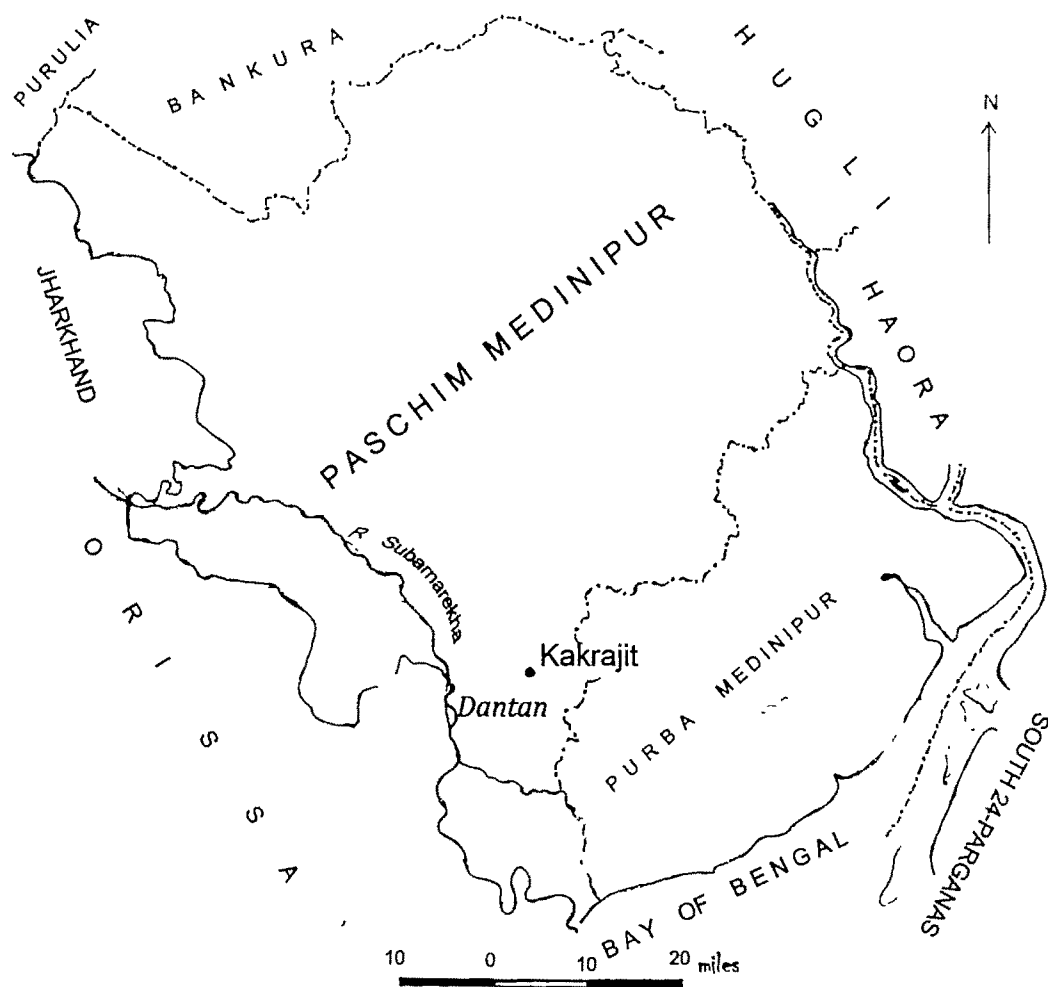


Figure 1: Geographical location of Kakrajit

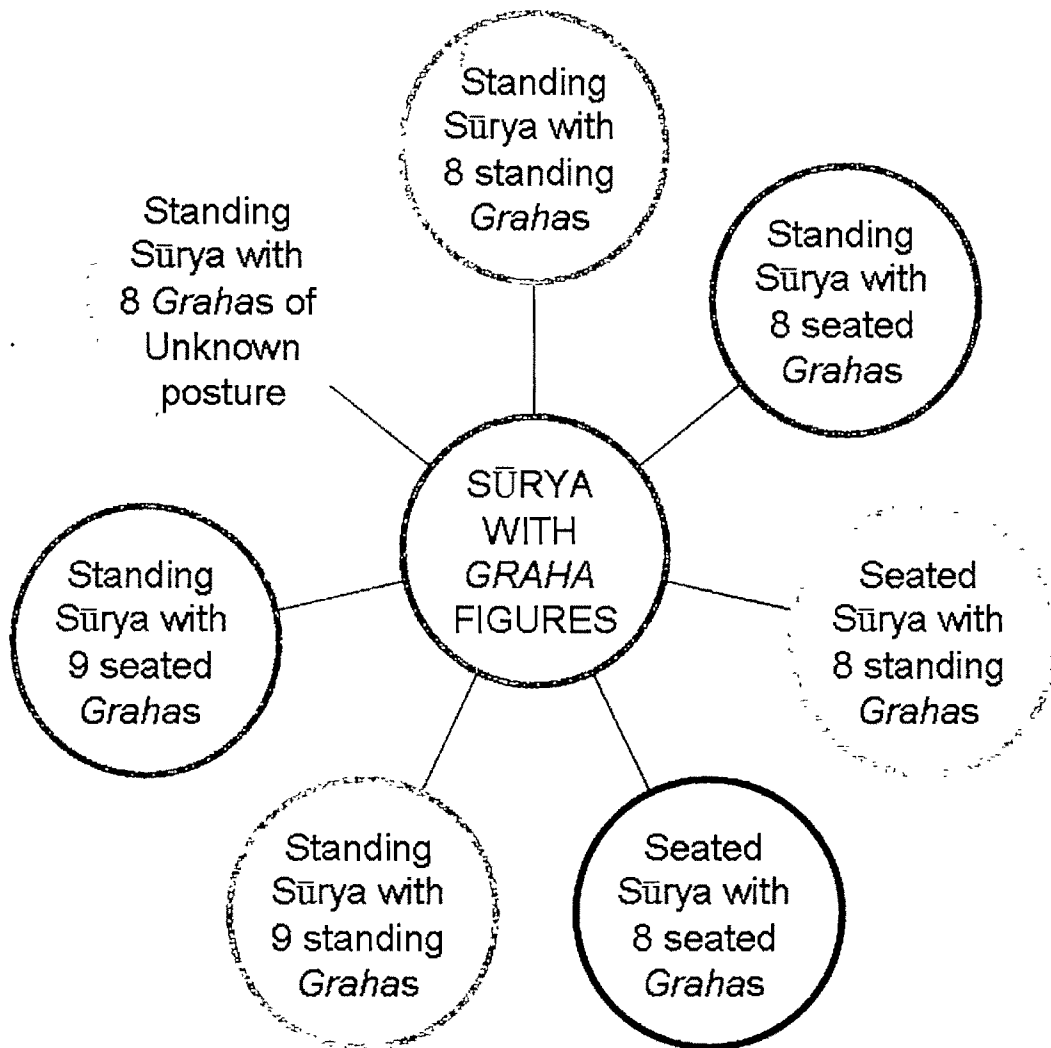


Figure 2 : Varying iconic configurations of planetary deities in association with the Sun god from images of eastern-northeastern India (reconstructed after Mevissen 2006)



Plate 1: Cluster of sculptures at Kakrajit



Plate 2 : Stone sculpture of Revanta at Kakrajit



Plate 3 : The partially damaged mound with extensive pottery scatter at Kakrajit



Plate 4 : The image of Sūrya with *Graha* figures at Kakrajit



Plate 5 : Vertical positioning of the Graha figures in the context of the central deity



Plate 6 : Details of the Graha figures

A Preliminary Attempt towards Understanding the Gleanings from the *Caryāpadas* on Navigation in Early Medieval Bengal (c. 10th Century CE—13th).

KRISHNENDU RAY

In the context of the social history of early India the social historian is centrally occupied with the question of the caste system. The issue begins with the four-fold *varṇa* system (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra), the *varṇasamkara*, and then the ‘the proliferation of castes’ as a ‘historical process’ etc. In the light of Indian archaeological works it is now clear that there existed many communities in early India in its ‘pre-literate’ phase. They had also cultural differences and at the same time socially functional networks as well. It appears that there were communities with different cultures who were outside the ‘elite-guided’ four-fold *varṇa* system in early India. Rather they were considered culturally ‘others’, ‘outsiders’, inferior to the *varṇa* system (Chattopadhyaya 2009: XXXVII—XLIV). They were the Śabarās, Ḍombas, Niśādas, etc. They performed different activities for life, which in turn served the then society in some way. Their services were required. Thus they were within and hardly without the society which although looked them askance. Therefore in their facing real life situations they also experienced the pleasures and sorrows of life. Naturally, they had also different aspects of their own lives. Significant indications towards these are available from the *Caryāpadas*. It is said to have belonged to the period from about the 10th century C.E to the 13th (Mukherjee 2000 : 19). There are scholarly discussions about the origins of untouchability, the brahmanical notions of or attitudes towards the degraded people (Jaiswal 1998 : 77ff, Jha 1987, Parasher-Sen 2007 : 5). There are also scholarly introductions to the different aspects of the *caryās* linguistic, literary, aesthetic as well as also how the *antyajas* themselves lived in the society of early medieval Bengal (Banerjee 1963 : 175-204, Sanyal : 1999 : 1-9, Sarkar 1978 : 49 ff, 161-205, Sen 1995 : 30-40). These introductions also point to the *antyajas*’ interactions with water channels and watercrafts in relation to their living in the contemporary society. In that context the relevant *caryās* have been introduced (Ghosh 1999:196-200). But attempts to understand their significance in the contemporary society are hardly available. This is particularly the objective that the present essay would like to ponder over. Occasionally to note, the poets of the *caryās* such as Sarahapā, Kāṇhapā, Luipā etc are known to have propagated their philosophical thoughts through those words/experiences which were familiar, common and current in real life situations in early medieval Bengal during the period. Of those expressions a few are found to be relevant to the present essay.

II

To begin with, it is found that certain words in certain *caryās* such as Vaṅga in *caryā* 39 (hereafter c.) (*Vaṅge*), Vaṅgāla in *caryā* 43, Vaṅgālī in c.49 (*aji Bhusuku vaṅgālī bhailī*), Gaṅgā, Jamuna in c.14 (*gaṅgā jaunā mānjhere vahai nāi*), Padmā in c.49 (*vāja ṇāva pādī panuā khālen vāhiu*) (Sen 1978: 147, 151, 135, cf. Sanyal 1999:4) indicate the riverine region of Vaṅga (Dhaka, Vikrampur, Bakarganj, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, sometimes Comilla, Noakhali districts from the 8th century onwards, Bhattacharyya 1978 : 59-62, Mukherjee 1990 : 67) and the people of the region Vaṅgāla lying south of Vaṅga or probably a part of Vaṅga (Bhattacharyya 1978 : 63). A few relevant *caryās* show that the people interacted with rivers for the purpose of their living. They probably preferred boat to road conveyance such as the chariot (*ratha*). This is indicated by a line of the *caryā* no. 14 of the *Caryāgītikoṣa* (*jo rathe caḍilā vāhavā ṇa jāi kulen kula vuḍai*) (Sen 1978 : 135). References to the boat are available from different *caryās*. The boat is mentioned as *nāvī* (c.8), *nāve* (c.10), *nāvī* (c.13), *nāi* (c.14), *nāva* (c.15), *nāvaḍhi*, *nāhi* (c.38) in the *Caryāgiti*. Now, the man who plies the boat is referred to as *nauvāhī* (*nauvāhī naukā tāṇaa guṇe*) (Sen 1978 : 146, c.38). The word *nauvāhī* may be compared to *nāvika*. For the word *nāvika* appears to have been known during the period under review. The Bhāterā copper plate of Govindakeśavadeva (c.13th century) clearly mentions not only Navika Dyota but also perhaps indicates the residences of more than one *Navika* (*Dyotyēnavikādi-grha*) (Chakravarti 2002 : 171, Gupta 1927-28). *Nāvika* might have been an ordinary sailor. Besides him there was another whose responsibility in plying the boat was probably more than the ordinary sailor (Chakravarti 2002 : 172). Probably this helmsman has been signified by the word *Kaṇṇahāra* (Sen 1978 : 135, c.13) (i.e. *Karṇadhāra*). So the ordinary sailor together with the helmsman played a vital role in plying the boat properly in their journeys along rivers. Probably in the light of this real life phenomenon the wise preceptor (*Sadguru*, c.8), as has been told, plays a vital role in rightly directing the human mind (*cia kaṇṇahāra*, c.13) across the void.

Information about different parts of the boat are also available from the relevant *caryās*. The *caryā* no.8 brings home that one Kāmali is advised to row (*vāhatu*) with oar (*keḍuāla*) the boat by weighing the anchor (*khuntī*) and by unting the boat from the rope (*kācchī*). The *caryā* no.14 brings out that the boat plied by Dombī had five oars (*pāñca keḍuāla*), rope on the tapering ends of the boat (*māṅge piṭata kācchī bāndhī*), a bale for drawing out water from the boat (*siñcahun pānī na paisai sāndhī*) and a mast (*puliṅgdā*). Probably it was a big boat (*vāja ṇāva*) (*vajra naukā?*). It was plied in the Padmā (*vājaṇāva pādī panuā khālen vāhiu*) (Sen 1978 : 151, 164). That the people of the period had acquaintance with the ocean (*samudā*) (i.e. *Samudra*) with its endlessness (*anta na*) is indicated by the expression running thus *māā-mohā samudā re anta na bujhasi thāhā* in *caryā* no. 15 and the *caryā* no. 42 reads thus *bhāga taraṅga ki soṣai sāara* (Sen 1978 : 136, 148).

A Preliminary Attempt towards Understanding the Gleanings from the *Caryāpadas* on Navigation

It appears from the relevant *caryās* that the people used the boat as a means of earning their livelihoods. The *caryā* no.8 describes the boat full of gold (*sone bharilī karuṇā nāvī*). Barring its literary grandeur it may be said that the boat was full of those articles which were considered valuable from the standpoint of earning livelihood. This assumption may connect one to *caryā* no. 10. The *caryā* mentions that Ḍombī used to come out of the town area (*nagara vāhireren*) by boat (*aisasi jāsi Ḍombī kāhari nāven*) in order to sell her loom and wicker baskets (*tānti vikaṇaa Ḍombī avaraṇā caṅgatā*) (Sen 1978 : 133). The word *tānti* may indicate the act of weaving. This connects one with the *caryā* no. 26. It mentions the job of carding cotton. And the spirit in which the *caryā* has been written may reveal that the job of cotton carding, particularly its fibre (*ānsure ānsu ānsu dhuṇi dhuṇi*) was done thoroughly probably leaving no residue (*niravar sesu*). The person(s) engaged in cotton carding job probably did it exhaustively (*tulā dhuṇi dhuṇi sune ahāriu puṇa laiā apanā caṭāriu*) (Sen 1978 : 140). Probably cotton plants were also planted (*kapāsu phuṭilā*) (Sen 1978 : 152, c.50).

Now, the purport of the four *caryās* (nos. 8, 10, 26 and 50) and the people's knowledge about the boat make out that the movements of the boat with articles across rivers, the job of carding cotton, particularly the job of weaving-clothes were common and probably well known. These practices were probably so common that these were taken as similes in order to easily propagate the doctrine of Buddhist Sahajiyā religion. In other words, these similes probably support their practice in reality. It seems to be difficult to overlook it. Then it may allow one to assume that the people took to the occupation of wicker basket-making and cotton-carding as well as the weaving of clothes for earning their livelihood. Bringing their products from the interior they used to go to sell their products by boats along rivers.

The discussion so far, raises a few questions. Firstly, where did they go with their boats full of valued articles to sell? Secondly, why was the job of cotton carding done so much? Even the point to be noted that cotton plants were planted for having raw cotton. However, answers to these questions are hardly available from the *Caryāpadas*. Still attempts may be made in the light of Ranabir Chakravarti's researches in the maritime trade in ancient Bengal.

III

On the strength of both epigraphic as well as literary evidences Chakravarti has demonstrated how the vast land of Vaṅga, Vaṅgāla, Samatāṭa (Comilla, Noakhali districts), including Harikela (Chittagong) became conducive to trading activities. In doing so he has also demonstrated how Devaparvata (Mainamati-Lalmai Ridge, southeastern Bangladesh), Vaṅgasāgara-Sambhāṇḍāriyaka (suggested to be Sabhar near Dhaka) or earlier Navyāvakaśika (new channels) and Dvārahāṭaka (a rural market centre *haṭṭa* around

Gaṅgāsāgara) emerged with riverine communications 'between the littorals and the interior' of Bengal (Chakravarti 2002 : 113-185). Another rural level big market centre is also known. This is inscribed as *haṭṭavara* (Gupta 1983). It is not difficult to understand that all these centres developed through ages. In this trading context of early medieval Bengal the above *caryās* conveying the movement of boats with articles through rivers may become historically meaningful. Accordingly, it is not unlikely that people might have tried to avail of those market centres for selling their articles. The assumption may bring one to the *caryās* nos. 10, 26 which, as said earlier, bring out that the jobs of carding cotton as well as weaving clothes were common. In other words, the purpose might have been to facilitate the production of cotton clothes. This may be corroborated by Chau ju kua (mid-thirteenth century) who refers to the production of cotton stuffs and 'common cotton cloth' in P'ong Kiel-lo (Vaṅgāla). What is more, people in Bengal might have also grown cotton as apparent from the *caryā* 50 in order probably to secure gains from trade in it. This is supported even by Marco Polo also (Mukherjee 1982:66). Thus it may be assumed that cotton was locally produced as well as carded. Then it was supplied to suit the demands of production of cotton clothes for their selling at rural markets. Boats as the medium of riverine communication were used in order to secure such trading opportunities also. People tried to avail those opportunities by utilizing natural riverine routes. They used to sell their products probably at those exchange centres mentioned above. Some might have changed their fortunes. The assumption may be compared to an interesting expression. It reads thus *caukoḍi bhaṇḍāra mora laiā sesa* (Sen 1978 : 151, c.49). The word *caukoḍi bhaṇḍāra* has been translated into *catuskoti bhāṇḍāra* (Sen 1978 : 151) (foursided? storehouse). Apparently, it might have been owned by some individual who lost all the articles stored in it (*mora laiā sesa*). One may be tempted to identify this *bhaṇḍāra* or *bhāṇḍāra* with the *Vaṅgāsagara-Sambhāṇḍāriyaka* of the tenth century C.E.; but that is difficult to prove at this moment of knowledge.

The above discussion thus makes out that there is wealth of information in the *Caryāpadas* regarding the economic, particularly riverine aspect, of the life of the socially degraded people of early medieval Bengal. It is not only the elite, but the non-elite, particularly those culturally/socially inferiors also as well who contribute in their own way to the development of the civilization and culture of people.

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The Museum Makers

MADHUPARNA ROYCHOWDHURY (KUMAR)

The historiography of modern museums has generally studied museum making in terms of a scholarly engagement of makers of museums with the new scientific tradition created by the enlightenment. Classification of objects across and within individual disciplines had imported into museum making the lessons of modern science. (Marina Frasca-Spada and Nick Jardine 2000; Tony Bennett 1985)¹ Not unnaturally many modern museums were devoted to specialized fields of knowledge, like, for examples, natural history, geology, archaeology or art. There are, however, in every part of the world museums which are usually labeled as multipurpose museums, which in the course of their development accommodated geological or natural history specimens alongside archaeological artifacts.² These multipurpose museums in a way are extensions into modern times of the kind of curiosity gallery that flourished in the upper class rich households of Europe during the renaissance. (Paula Findlen 2000).³ Before modern science intruded into this kind of cultural celebration of the varieties in human life by creating narrow lanes of specialization, museums remained what had been often labeled as a 'theater of memory' incorporating within its precincts a large variety of cultural products and drawing its sustenance mainly from the essential humanist preoccupation with the curiosity about the unknown. The purpose of this short paper is to enlighten upon the contribution of a few distinguished museum makers in early twentieth century India whose curiosity about Indian life and history motivated them to embark on ambitious projects of museum making.

In view of the great emphasis that archaeology had always received in museum making in India in the early part of the twentieth century, the protagonists of this essay were all archaeologists, professional or amateur. An important group of museum makers belonged to the imperial school of archaeology. They were mostly high functionaries of the Archaeological Survey of India, like for examples, Sir John Marshall or many of his deputies like Henry Couseans, David Spooner or Theodor Bloch. At different points of time they managed the Survey's regional circles and apart from undertaking archaeological explorations and excavations were also instrumental in setting up site museums. Spooner, for example, before achieving fame for the famous Pataliputra excavation, served for a long time in the north-western frontier circle of the Archaeological Survey. The interest that excavations in the north western frontier created in Spooner's mind in the Gandhara sculptures was adequately reflected in the way he designed a local museum at Peshawar.⁴ Strictly speaking, the Peshawar museum which was set up very early in the twentieth century was not a site museum, managed directly by the Archaeological Survey. The museum was managed by the municipality and was recognized by the Survey as a local

The Museum Makers

museum in which local archaeological artifacts belonging mainly to the Gandhara School of sculptures were assembled.⁵ The initiative to set up a local museum like this came from Spooner just in the same way the Mathura museum, another local museum that contained mostly sculptures of the Mathura school was a creation of Sir John Marshall. Marshall who had personally supervised the excavation at Sarnath was the man who designed Sarnath museum in meticulous detail. Easily comparable was Couseans' initiative to establish a site museum in the temple site of Khajuraho during 1911-12. In fact, Marshall and Couseans had a prolonged correspondence regarding the size, shape and the aesthetics of the Khajuraho museum.⁶

The success of these imperial archaeologists in museum making was heavily indebted to a whole range of local collaborators whose interest in museum making however, went far beyond the limited professional concerns of the Survey's British functionaries. Celebration of India's ancient heritage or celebration of the antiquity of their places of birth came high on their agenda. In course of time such Indian collaborators who had the professional expertise and were recruited by the survey as official archaeologists constituted the Indian school of archaeology which came to flourish around 1920s within the Archaeological Survey. As far as the eastern circle of the Survey was concerned Rakhal Das Banerjee or Ramaprasad Chanda were officials of the Archaeological Survey who made the greatest contribution to the massive expansion of the Indian Museum's archaeological section from the second decade of the last century. It was through such men like Banerjee, Chanda or D.R. Bhandarkar who looked after the archaeological section of the Indian Museum alongside his teaching responsibilities in the University of Calcutta, that Marshall's dream about a central repository of archaeological artifacts in the Indian Museum was realized. Dayaram Sahni, another noted contemporary Indian archaeologist of the Survey went to Kashmir, deputed by Marshall to organize the archaeological museum of the Kashmir state just in the same way as Couseans had earlier assisted the Indore state to organize a similar collection of central Indian sculptures in the museum at Indore.⁷

By the early part of the twentieth century, however, there was yet another group of museum makers who by no stretch of imagination can be classified as professional archaeologists. Some like Gaurishankar Ojha was basically a linguist whose proficiency in Sanskrit created in his mind a kind of natural interest in epigraphy. Ojha also studied history in the Bombay University and absorbed from his exposure to ancient Roman history, the new ethos among historians about the need for accurate epigraphic knowledge regarding India's dynastic history. Consequently the museums he set up initially at Udaipur as an official of Udaipur royal estate and then more ambitiously at Ajmer carried Ojha's sense of Rajput history. At Mathura much of Marshall's initiative would have failed without the kind of support that he had received from Pandit Radhakrishna who unlike Ojha who had some professional expertise in writing ancient history of Rajasthan, was virtually an

amateur collector. The amateurish manner in which Radhakrishna organized the Mathura museum became matter of serious complaints inviting later an enquiry by the Archaeological Survey that threatened to dismantle the museum altogether. It was largely because of the resistance of the local people and the intervention by the United Provinces government that saved the Mathura museum from extinction. However amateurish Radhakrishna was in arranging the display at the museum, what was still commendable was the great effort that a man like Radhakrishna, following the more notable examples like Ojha, had made in collecting and organizing the museum virtually without any financial compensation. Radhakrishna's frequent correspondence with Marshall revealed how the museum was starved of basic resources and the Pandit had to pay from his own personal resource the money to acquire archaeological specimens by undertaking journeys to distant places. Similar was the experience of a man like Nalinikanta Bhattasali, the famous architect of the Dacca museum. With meager resources Bhattasali traveled through the length and breadth of eastern Bengal to collect specimens of Pala and Sena art from the rural districts of the province. These men like Pandit Radhakrishna or Nalinikanta Bhattasali were great protagonists of local museums and continued to uphold the cause of local museums even at a time when Sir John Marshall had begun to change his priorities. Early in the century Marshall had felt that the demand for archaeological conservation called for the creation of a whole range of local museums but from around 1911 he began to prefer concentration of artifacts in one centralized museum.⁸ Despite their differences Marshall and the local custodians of museums who resisted this policy of centralization, however shared one thing in common. They explored unknown territories and their curiosity took them to inaccessible places. For all such men, it was a great human effort to bring together artifacts from distant places to create the basis of the great museums of the future. When visitors look at the marvels in these museums no one is bothered about the trials and tribulations of the men who had set up these museums. This essay wishes to celebrate the efforts of a few museum makers who at a critical moment in the early twentieth century set up significant local museums to initiate in their own ways a kind of museum movement in India.

II

Such private initiatives towards museum making, undoubtedly were supported by the new policy of archaeological conservation. When Marshall took over charge as the Director-General of the newly incarnated Archaeological Survey, conservation of ancient monuments began to receive greater priorities, emerging at the same time as a new impetus in the establishment of museums. In view of the conservationist slant in the archaeological policies of the Government of India, it was only too natural that the Survey's officials made a seminal contribution to the development of museums.⁹ Marshall at this stage was anxious to promote local museums in different ancient sites managed either by the Survey's officials

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directly or by local bodies and societies which were expected to draw on the resources of the Archaeological Survey. Apart from suggesting measures towards the proper conservation and display of objects in such museums, the Survey regularly replenished the museums with new artifacts and antiquities excavated from various archaeological sites. Museums in towns like Peshawar or Mathura became famous for local collections of Gandhara or Mathura sculptures.

The development of such local museums however, like the ones at Ajmer and Mathura depended greatly on the initiatives of men like Gaurishankar Ojha and Pandit Radhakrishna. We find similar initiatives in Bengal from Rakhal Das Banerjee, Ramaprasad Chanda and Nalinikanta Bhattashali. While Rakhal Das Banerjee and Ramaprasad Chanda were associated with the Survey, a man like N.K. Bhattashali almost single handedly built up the Dacca Museum. Some amount of information, although not adequate, on the trials and anxieties of such museum makers as Ojha, Radhakrishna or Bhattashali exist in the documents of the Archaeological Survey. This little bit of information enables us to form an idea about how setting up these museums for all of them involved depletion of physical and financial resources. Deficient support from government institutions and lack of adequate patronage from the wealthy classes added to their difficulties. Despite many problems that came their way, all of these museum makers traveled widely in the countryside braving bad roads and inclement weather to collect archaeological specimens from far away places. Besides the collectors' instinct which certainly plays a critical role in museum making, such initiatives require to be placed in the larger backdrop of a new historical consciousness among Indian intellectuals that archaeological discoveries had created. The museum makers by and large, apart from their aspiration for achieving professional fulfillment were also engaging with their own senses of the great Indian heritage. In their anxiety to display this heritage, they imported into museums their distinctive historical vision. The museum that Ojha had built at Ajmer was based on his historical sense of the ancient pedigree of the Rajput clans while his counter parts in Bengal were anxious to celebrate the contribution of the Pala and the Sena rulers to the development of a distinct Bengali culture and identity. The collector's instinct was suitably matched with national and regional pride. The incentive did not come merely from the search for knowledge; it had something to do also with deep emotional attachment to the history of a region.

III

The career of Gaurishankar Ojha is a perfect example of how a man who had wished to write the ancient history of the Rajputs became a custodian of artifacts which told the story of these clans through epigraphic and sculptural specimens in the museums. In his old age he recounted how he traveled hundred of miles in bullock carts to collect archaeological

artifacts. Ojha is known as the author of the famous *Rajputane Ki Itihas* which to a large extent was inspired by James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajputana* (1815). Before this book was published in 1926, Ojha had written small pieces on the Paramara and the Solanki rulers of southern Rajasthan. Growing up in the state of Sirohi which prided of its numerous temples, Ojha's curiosity about India's ancient history was further stoked by his exposure to ancient Roman history as a student of Bombay University. In an age when archaeological discoveries were creating a more acute sense about India's past, the future historian of the Rajput clans promised to write a history of the glorious rulers of his land on the basis of more accurate epigraphic evidence. The inscriptions that he managed to collect initially as the curator of a small museum attached to the palace of the Udaipur rulers and then as the Curator of the Ajmer Museum helped to reconstruct the history of the Rajput clans. Apart from dynastic history Ojha also had an abiding interest in the history of Brahminical religion. Consequently as a Curator of the Ajmer Museum which was ironically named by the British resident as the 'National Museum of Rajputana', he translated this vision of ancient history of Rajasthan into a massive collection of inscriptions and sculptures at Ajmer which in the end enabled historians to form a more comprehensive idea about the region's history, its divisions along sub-regional and sectarian lines and the presence of powerful ruling lineages in its different parts.¹⁰

If this was what the man ultimately contributed to enrich historical knowledge his efforts to strengthen the foundation of the institutions which he wished to build were beset with enormous difficulties. He started his career at Udaipur as an employee of the Udaipur state and expected that as descendants of the famous rulers of Mewar, the princes of Udaipur would support his endeavour to create a museum which would celebrate the ancient pedigree of the Rajput rulers. By then in the nationalist historical imagination, the Rajputs had already started featuring as offsprings of the ancient Kshatriyas of India. Ojha of course was not the only one to expect some amount of enthusiasm from the Rajput states. When the Ajmer Museum was set up and Ojha was brought to Ajmer to organize the collection, officials of the Survey like H.P. Vogel had similar expectations. Men like Vogel believed that as the National Museum of Rajputana, the museum at Ajmer would emerge as the principal repository of numerous artifacts, mainly inscriptions and sculptures scattered all over Rajasthan.¹¹ Such expectations were never fulfilled. The Rajput princes came up with little support for these initiatives, so much so that the Ajmer Museum was continuously starved off basic financial resources. The excitement of a collector who traveled long distances to bring archaeological specimens to the museum was matched with the utter disappointment that arose from the indifference shown by the wealthy and powerful men.¹² (Sarda, 1941)

This was precisely the reason why Ojha decided to shift from Udaipur to Ajmer with the high hope that the Archaeological Survey's interests in this project would spare him of the

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kind of tribulations that he had to undergo at Udaipur. The experience at Ajmer however was not much different. Despite the interest that the Archaeological Survey had shown in the museum the kind of local support that Ojha and his mentors in the Survey expected, was not forthcoming. In a letter to Vogel, Ojha complained about the inadequacy of the meager financial resource that the Ajmer municipality had provided to the museum. The clerks were not paid for months and the Curator had to spend from his own personal resources a large amount of money for purposes of travel in search of antiquities. The result was that the Curator found it extremely difficult to organize the museum properly. A report of the Archaeological Survey complained about the manner in which the archaeological exhibits were cramped in four rooms without appropriate labels and display boxes. There was no attempt towards classification of objects. There was an art section which had a few glass cases displaying medieval paintings.¹³ However much Vogel and others tried to cultivate princely support, the financial crisis of this institution remained endemic. The personal effort of a man like Ojha ran into rough weather when the prospective princely patron refused to take much interest in Ojha's museological search for India's ancient valour. On the contrary they were interested more in displaying their Mughal connection. The only palace museum that was set up before independence was at Bikaner but the display material in the famous Ganga Singh Palace museum that Maharaja Sadul Singh of Bikaner had established was dominated almost entirely by paintings and the arms which proclaimed Bikaner's greatness as a Mughal feudatory.¹⁴

Ojha's projects encountered problems from other spheres as well. To collect historical relics from dispersed localities with sculptures being worshipped as village deities always remained one of the intractable problems that the museum makers of this period continuously faced. Collection and transportation of such objects from their local contexts to a distant museum provoked frequent resistance from local inhabitants. In some cases such local resistance turned out to be the incentive for establishing local museums. For example, the resistance of the Assamese intellectuals to R.D. Banerjee's insistence on transferring antiquities from some of the newly explored archaeological sites of Assam was one important reason for the major contribution that Assam Anusandhan Parishad made to the creation of what eventually became the well-known Gauhati archaeological museum.¹⁵ Similar such examples can be cited from the various districts of Bengal where the possessiveness of the local intelligentsia about the local archaeological relics generated the initiatives for establishing make-shift local museums, particularly at a time when the heightened historical consciousness about the glorious cultural heritage of the Indian people was emerging as a nationalist counter-point to the imperial practice of demeaning Indian culture.¹⁶ In many other instances however, custodial disputes over archaeological relics were not occasioned by any intellectual curiosity. Problems concerning acquisitions became compounded when sculptures were worshipped as deities. Tapati Guha Thakurta has written

of the Didarganj Yakshi's transition from a village deity to a museum object despite the difficulties posed by the local people.¹⁷

Ojha's career as a museum maker encountered problems of similar nature. The development of the museum at Ajmer apart from the problem of limited resource was also vitiated by the custodial disputes with religious communities when objects of worship began to figure in museum collection. In 1910 the Ajmer Museum had to part with a few Jain sculptures to the Jain community of the town on the ground that these were temple deities. The controversy had started much earlier in 1901 when the Victoria Memorial Hall of Calcutta had acquired these sculptures with a high artistic value during the visit of Prince of Wales to Calcutta. Since the Victoria Memorial eventually took greater interest in painting and was designed as a painting gallery by its maker, Lord Curzon, these images were transferred to Ajmer. Later at the intervention of Colvin, the Resident of Rajputana, these images were restored to the Jain community of the city even though Curzon had felt that the Ajmer Museum was probably the best place to keep them under proper care and preservation. Colvin reasoned 'that the available space in the Ajmer museum.....is already filled with relics of far greater antiquarian interest than is possessed by these Jain images.' If the Yakshi from Didarganj had the fortune to become a museum object, these images returned to the temples. A similar dispute occurred in 1909 around a marble lingam discovered in Arhai-din-ka jhonpra. The museum kept them till some citizens of Ajmer, citing the precedence of Jain idols, demanded the surrender of the lingam to a local priest. Fearing the adverse reactions from the town's orthodox Hindus, the museum made little effort to retrieve it.¹⁸

In the career of N.K. Bhattasali who features as one of the protagonists in this essay we come across frequent lamentations over similar failures. Yet the struggle of this kind that every museum maker had to undertake in their life has not left behind enough documentation. The bits and pieces of information that are available from autobiographical writings and a few files in the archives of the Archaeological Survey make us aware of such struggles and torments of the museum makers. Some one like Ojha was relatively more fortunate. To the historians and British officials Ojha was a fairly well-known person for his knowledge of Sanskrit. Others who were not so well-known among men in high places, the life of a Collector was never smooth sailing. A man like Pandit Radhakrishna in his attempt to build the Mathura museum, which eventually became famous for its collection of sculptures of the Mathura school, had to face even greater difficulties. Pandit Radhakrishna remained in charge of the museum in an honorary capacity. Initially the museum was a small collection of Kusana and Gandhara relics under the management of the Municipality Board which maintained a building and employed a chowkidar. The provincial government was willing to offer a modest annual grant of Rupees one hundred which, obviously enough, was not adequate for maintaining professionally equipped curatorial staff. The officials

of the Archaeological Survey of course provided their services but ultimately the management of the museum was left with a man who began to officiate as the honorary assistant curator without any financial reward.¹⁹

Despite this Pandit Radhakrishna managed to build up a fairly impressive collection. While recounting his experience of assembling the relics of a stupa from the Maihar state, he wrote how 'after roaming about two months they brought me the news of the great stupa remains been scattered all over the Nagda state and partly also in the Rewa state. All the places where inscribed objects belonging to the stupa are lying have been noted. They have been of opinion that this can be acquired for archaeology. Maihar has a lot of antiquities. The minister of Maihar being a very enlightened gentleman helped in listing antiquities brought to the museum'.²⁰ Within a few years after Pandit Radhakrishna plunged into a relentless search for antiquities, the Mathura Museum expanded very rapidly. Sir John Marshall in an elaborate note on the museum mentioned how 'the important collection of antiquities has grown rapidly in the course of the last four years mainly owing to the valuable assistance of Pandit Radhakrishna.....and the result is that the museum building is now much too small to contain the collection that has been amassed.' The valuable sculptures in the museum included the headless statue of Kanishka.²¹

In spite of Radhakrishna's sincere efforts the museum ran into difficulties due to the indifference of the United Provinces Government. The Provincial government at one point even suggested the possibility of transferring the museum to the Archaeological Survey.²² The untidy nature of display also persuaded Marshall later in 1917 to transfer the entire Mathura collection to a proposed Imperial Museum at Delhi. Marshall certainly was overstretching his negative assessment of the museum perhaps in his attempt to transfer the entire collection to Delhi. Although he recognized the valuable contribution of Radhakrishna, he was now suspicious of the historical value of things that the man had so painstakingly assembled. Radhakrishna on his part kept on pressing the Provincial government for a more spacious building and financial support.²³ Even though the existence of the museum became protected after the Provincial government decided to take over the responsibility, Radhakrishna had to face an inspection committee headed by Professor R.C. Majumdar, which enquired into the problem of inadequate management of the museum. Once again a professional historian like Majumdar found many faults in the collection. In his report he wrote that the museum 'contains the richest collection of antiquities that I have ever seen in any single museum. It is dark and small and valuable things have been merely huddled up in various corners in a haphazard manner. There are so many inscribed images and slabs and other valuable finds, but it is incredible that a civilized government could leave things in the present condition for years.' To rectify the situation the provincial government engaged Ramaprasad Chanda to undertake a rearrangement of the galleries in early 1931. We have a detailed report of Ramaprasad Chanda which indicates

how he made an effort to organize the display in as attractive a manner as possible. The museum certainly acquired a more elegant rule but in the process the great contribution of Radhakrishna as the builder of the museum who did it mainly out of his love for history was safely forgotten.²⁴

Another example of how self-less and untiring effort of museum makers like Radhakrishna contributed to the emergence of rich local collections comes from Bengal. Nalinikanta Bhattasali who built the Dacca Museum from the scratch compares favourably with Rakhal Das Banerjee and Ramaprasad Chanda in scholarship. But while Banerjee and Chanda had the support of the Survey and as officials of the celebrated Indian Museum enjoyed a good deal of institutional and government support, Bhattasali's was essentially a personal initiative to create the museum at Dacca. The museum at Dacca started as a small collection of archaeological finds from eastern Bengal in March 1913. There were schemes suggested by the Bengal government to link the museum with the university. This connection was forged much later in the 1930s after a Museum Reorganization Committee in its report of 1933 underlined the importance of the museum for the history courses in the university. Yet, the proposal to merge the museum into the university was resisted and the museum remained a public museum supported by the Dacca municipality with occasional grants offered by the government of Bengal. Consequently the financial situation of the museum never improved even though the Museum Committee asserted its rights as the natural recipient of all antiquities found in Dacca and Chitagong divisions of the Bengal presidency.²⁵

Despite an otherwise slipshod development the presence of a great scholar like Nalinikanta Bhattasali made an important difference. Apart from collecting specimens from different parts of eastern Bengal, he also conducted excavations in some local sites in order to replenish the archaeological section of the museum. Unlike in the cases of the Ajmer and the Mathura museum, the records of the Archaeological Survey at Bhuvaneswar, containing a few firsthand report of Bhattasali leave us with a more accurate idea of the struggle that a museum maker had to endure in his attempt to build a respectable collection. For example, during 1923 Bhattasali made an abortive attempt to acquire a few pieces of sculptures from the temple site of Vajrayogini, a prosperous settlement in the neighbourhood of Dacca town and a find spot of a number of Hindu and Buddhist sculptures in the Dacca Museum. Bhattasali however failed to remove to the museum a few old sculptures including an image of the Buddhist deity of Parnasabari and an unusual theriomorphic image of Vishnu in his incarnation as a fish. These images were fixed on the walls of a modern temple and the local residents did not permit their removal to the museum.²⁶ There were occasions when the museum maker had to persuade private owners of archaeological specimens to contribute them to the museums but such efforts very seldom met with success.

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We have among the documents a few extensive tour diaries of Bhattasali during the years between 1937 and 1939.²⁷ These tour diaries are important to the extent that they demonstrate the interface between the Collector's concern about preserving and displaying antiquities in a museum and the proprietorial rights that private individuals or a local community claimed over the artifacts. Bhattasali reports in his report of 1938 about the four extended tours that he had undertaken during 1937. The main purpose of visiting the districts of Bakargunj and Faridpur, especially a place like Idilpur which became famous for its association with a copper plate inscription of a local ruler, Sri Chandra Dev of the Chandra dynasty. Informed by a friend that the Idilpur plate of Sri Chandra was in the possession of a Zamindari family of Faridpur, he made this trip to persuade the Roychowdhurys to make a donation of this inscription to the museum. The Roychowdhurys, apart from being landholders, had distinguished themselves in different spheres of public life. One member of the family was a Professor at Berhampur College and another who taught in a local school was a local Congress leader. For his failure to persuade this family to part with this historical relic, the museum maker expressed his disappointment in the report in a tone of utter resignation. Bhattasali's experience which he narrated in his report is worth quoting in order to underline the numerous moments of disappointment that men like him had to undergo. He writes

"it is a strange irony of fate that preserved in such an educated and cultured family of very great standing in the entire pargana, if not in the district, this important document of history is practically lost to the world of scholars. A meeting of the local gentry and school students were organized in the local high school buildings and the Curator on request spoke for more than an hour on the process of piecing together authentic history from these old charters and inscriptions but all went to no purpose. The Curator was refused even a sight of the copper plate and had to return disappointed."²⁸

In the life of a museum maker disappointments of this nature were usual happenings. If moments of disappointment despaired a museum maker, there were moments of success as well. Unlike the note of despondency that one comes across in the report of 1938, Bhattasali's report on his tours of 1939 had a more ebullient tone. Informed by one Bisweswar Chakrabarty, he laid his hands on a huge finds of coins in a village in the district of Sylhet. Accompanied by the informant, he went there and managed to retrieve a number of very significant coins belonging to the Sultanate period of Bengal from the local Zamindars although the story about the huge hoard turned out to be a rumour. The same report indicates how the man went from Sylhet to the forests of Assam in search of old inscriptions 'braving the dense jungle, the wild elephants and tigers.' The result was an important discovery of the well-known inscription of Bhuti Varmana, a ruler of Assam during the 4th century.²⁹

IV

The foregoing account, written in a somewhat celebratory fashion, tried to bring out some of the personal dimensions of museum making. The brief resume of the initiatives of a few museum makers in establishing some of the more important local museums in early twentieth century India enables us to form a rough idea about how the museum movement was indebted to the collectors' instincts of the museum makers. How these instincts are shaped is of course a problem of a larger dimension. Depending on the personal inclination, education, disciplinary loyalties and the overarching political contexts, it is easy to identify different kinds of initiatives towards museum making. We have already suggested how the emergence of modern science had brought about a new dimension in early modern museums. The curiosity shop of the renaissance became subjected to the scrutiny of new conventions of scientific knowledge. This of course does not mean that the attraction for painting galleries became irrelevant when museum making, governed by the scientific principles of classification, was becoming integrated with a larger concern for production and consumption of knowledge. The painting gallery apart from producing the wisdom of the art historians always remained a viewer's delight. This is one important feature of museums which is often forgotten in our attempt to foreground museums as a part of the liberal educational project. Similar can be the impact of the kind of archaeological specimens that these museum makers were collecting. Since the reception of the museum by the people is difficult to measure, our endeavour has been to relive briefly the sort of unceasing initiative that our main protagonists in this essay had shown in gathering materials from dispersed localities. This at least enables us to read into the minds of these men whose anxiety to establish the ancient pedigree of local cultures created in them the collectors' zeal. The overarching dominance of archaeology in museum making in India during the early part of the twentieth century has been widely recognized. This essay reiterates this argument and draws attention to a few individuals who engaged with this intellectual concern for archaeological knowledge, inspired at the same time by a deep emotional attachment for the great Indian heritage. Indeed the larger context of museum making in India in the early part of the twentieth century, nationalism and local patriotism remained as much important factors as the quest for knowledge. The act of collection forms an important chapter in the way museums came to be built on essentially individual initiatives. Personalities like Ojha, Radhakrishna or Bhattasali in this sense represented the living history of the museums.

Notes

1. *Books and the Sciences in History*, (Cambridge, 2000) edited by Marina Frasca-Spada and Nick Jardine contains information about how collections of natural history in course of time became the basis of many scientific museums in which modern methods of classifications were followed. Tony Bennett's, *The Birth of the Museum*, (London, 1985) also dwells upon the relationship between museums and the enlightenment.

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2. A number of important museums in undivided India including the ones at Lahore, Lucknow and the more famous Indian Museum at Calcutta had been from the beginning designed as multi-purpose museums. The centenary volume of the Indian Museum, taking the Asiatic Society collection as its beginning, which was published by the trustees of the Indian Museum in 1914 and reprinted in 2004 contains information about how the natural history collection over time came to be overweighed to some extent by archaeology.
3. For a brief treatment of the multipurpose nature of private collections of curiosities in renaissance Europe, see Paula Fidler, *The Modern Muses: Renaissance Collecting and the Cult of Remembrance* in Susan Crane (ed.), *Museums and Memory*, (California, 2000).
4. Office of the Director-General of Archaeology (Hereafter ODGA), File. 211, Serial. 1-6, July, 1911.
5. The Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey during the first two decades of the twentieth century contain a systematic reportage of the gradual assemblage of the sculptures of the Gandhara School one after another in the Peshawar Museum.
6. ODGA, File. 81, Serial, 1-11, June, 1905-1906 carries a good deal of information about the initial planning of the Khajuraho Museum shortly after the systematic exploration of the site.
7. Information about the initiatives of Sir John Marshall and Henry Cousens, who had been for many years in charge of the western circle of the Archaeological Survey to set up museums at Indore in the territory of the Holkars and at Sanchi at Bhopal, in collaboration with the princely rulers have been recorded in the File. 78, June, 1905, in the record room of the Director-General of Archaeology. It is also noteworthy that from the turn of the nineteenth century a few Indian states, like Bhopal, Hyderabad and Kashmir became interested in archaeological conservation.
8. ODGA File No. 409, June, 1912 contains information about Marshall's recommendation for a central Imperial Museum in Delhi, after the capital of British Empire was shifted from Calcutta. As a first step he suggested the whole-sale transfer of the Mathura Museum to Delhi. This was in sharp contrast to his own emphasis on fostering local collection written down as a policy statement of some sort in the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the year 1902-1903.
9. See the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the years 1902-1903 and 1903-1904.
10. In Ojha's self-introduction in the preface to his *Rajputana Ki Itihas* he emphasized the importance of the new archaeological knowledge for writing a more accurate history of ancient India. *Ojha Nibandha Sangraha* contains numerous pieces that he wrote on archaeology, historical geography, iconography and ancient architecture. I have dwelt upon the detailed history of the Ajmer Museum in an essay 'The Museum as a text' to be published in the forth-coming D.C. Sircar Centenary Volume under the auspices of the department of Ancient Indian History and Culture.
11. The note of the Director General of Archaeology on the Ajmer Museum was enclosed in ODGA File No. 208, Serial, 1-14, July, 1911.

12. As late as 1941 Hari Vilas Sarda in his *Ajmer: Historical and Descriptive* (Ajmer, 1941) p. 120 wrote about the meagre resources of the museum. The museum had earlier been maintained by a small donation of Rupees fifty by the Ajmer Municipality and without the much expected princely support it continued to starve of basic resources.
13. The note of the Director-General of Archaeology cited above has left a few impressions about how the museum was inadequately organized.
14. For the material in the Bikaner Museum, V.S. Srivastava, *Catalogue and Guide: Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum*, (Jaipur, 1961) contains useful information.
15. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the year 1922-23, p. 152.
16. For a detailed treatment of numerous local initiatives in Bengal towards establishment of local museums see my unpublished Calcutta University P.hD thesis *Displaying India's Heritage: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Museum Movement in Colonial Bengal* (2010), especially the chapter entitled History Men and the Museum Makers: Bengal in the early Twentieth Century.
17. Tapati Guha Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-Colonial India* (Delhi, 2004) pp. 207-216.
18. ODGA File No. 60, May, 1910 contains the correspondence between Colvin and Marshall regarding the Jain images and the lingam found in Arhai-din ka Jhonpra.
19. ODGA File No. 127, Serial, 1-20, May, 1911.
20. ODGA File No. 153, Serial, 1-13, June, 1913.
21. ODGA File No. 127, May, 1911.
22. ODGA File No. 198, Serial, 1-56, June, 1912.
23. ODGA File No. 127, May, 1911.
24. ODGA File. 468/19, 1925-1927 has among its enclosures the detailed report on the Mathura Museum by Professor R.C. Majumdar. Ramaprasad Chanda's report on the Mathura Museum is available in the combined volume of the annual reports of the Archaeological Survey of India for the years 1930-1934.
25. National Archives of India, Bhuvaneswar (NAI, BNS hereafter), Archaeological Survey of India (Eastern Circle), File No. 100/1941, 'Report of the Dacca Museum Reorganization Committee (1933)'.
26. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the years 1922-1923 and 1923-1924.
27. The Annual Reports of the Dacca Museum for the years between 1926 and 1939 are available in the File 100/1941 of the Archaeological Survey of India, Eastern Circle in National Archives, Bhuvaneswar.
28. Annual Report of the Dacca Museum for the year 1936-1937.
29. Annual Report of the Dacca Museum for the year 1938-1939.

A New Disease Experience : Spotlight on the Bhāvaprakāśa

SUKLA DAS

Medical literature in Sanskrit in the mediaeval period of India became primarily receptive and passive.¹ The process actually started with summarizing the classics of Caraka-Suśruta-Vāgbhaṭa and others and codifying them as separate treatises. One notices a pronounced decline in new redactions and commentaries and dearth of original texts. The Saṁgraha texts appearing from about the seventh century onwards were only epitomes of earlier texts.² That a state of decline had truly set in in Indian scientific attainments finds reflection in the writings of Alberuni too who viewed nothing substantial but the scanty remains of bygone days.³ It reminds us of subsequent lament of Abul Fazl that a stage has reached when the spirit of questioning and enquiry was rather discouraged or 'closed'.⁴ In fact interplay of several factors operated behind the phenomenon of decline and a developed tradition lost its creative vigour and pristine glory.

Against this backdrop one work stands out prominent and that is the Bhāvaprakāśa of Bhāva Miśra, which represents a remarkable synthesis of the existing knowledge of medicine and new experiences and practices within the array of historical circumstances⁵ negating or belieing the conventional notion constructed and propagated by the British imperialist historiographers that pre-modern past India had one structured monolithic system of medicine with no inclination for change in time and space.⁶ Hence this outstanding work awaits a historical re-examination.

We often forget that the Caraka Saṁhitā made the most significant statement that medical science has no end, it is ever-expanding⁷ validity of which has not yet been challenged. Similarly the Suśruta Saṁhitā emphatically argued for acquisition of knowledge of unusual remedies even from different traditions.⁸ Interestingly, this Saṁhitā gives a broad hint to medical colloquia, the most valuable platform for interaction among medical professionals for widening the knowledge horizon.⁹ The Bhāvaprakāśa though rooted in Indian intellectual tradition is an eloquent testimony to openness to receive new knowledge strongly propagated by the two classical works on Indian health science and medicine of global repute.

So far as the time-frame of Bhāva Miśra's Bhāvaprakāśa is concerned it is generally assigned to the sixteenth century, a more precise date being apparently not available¹⁰ highlighting his plausible contemporaneity with the Mughal emperor Akbar (1536- 1605).¹¹ It is suggested that he belonged to Vārānasi.¹² Another scholarly opinion however indicates that he originally hailed from the trans-Vindhyan region, Andhradeśa in particular and he made extensive travels and came closer to diverse medical traditions of his time.¹³ The

colophon of this text records that he was the son of Laṭakana Miśra.¹⁴ The term Lataka literally implies a lewd person. Could it underline his specialisation in the less orthodox area of diseases relating to genital organs is only an academic speculation?¹⁵

The Bhāvaprakāśa is a comprehensive treatise and is particularly valuable for numerous citations that are not available in the printed texts of classical masters of medicine.¹⁶ Consequently it often bridges knowledge gaps and helps a better understanding of the texts logically cited. This monumental compilation work strongly certifies Bhāva Miśra's profound knowledge and commitment to health science and his critical analysis of enormous medical materials at his disposal.

A perusal of its contents is highly rewarding. The Bhāvaprakāśa is divided into three Khaṇḍas; Pūrva, Madhyama and Uttara. The Pūrva Khaṇḍa in two Bhāgas and six Prakaraṇas deals with the origin of medical science (Āyurveda prakaraṇa), cosmology (Śṛṣṭi prakaraṇa), anatomy and embryology (Garbha prakaraṇa), paediatrics (Bala prakaraṇa), dietics (Dinacaryā prakaraṇa) and pharmacology (Miśra prakaraṇa). Still more extensive and focus of attention of this study is the Madhyama Khaṇḍa that treats in four Bhāgas special pathology and therapy. The Uttara Khaṇḍa primarily concentrates on aphrodisiacs (Vājikaraṇa) and elixirs.¹⁷ A small pharmacological work entitled Guṇaratnamālā is also ascribed to Bhāva Miśra.¹⁸

Significantly the Pūrvārdha of Bhāvaprakāśa gives a detailed account of feeling of pulse of a patient (Nāḍī parīkṣaṇam) for the purpose of diagnosis of different diseases, for determining the state of his health and mind in addition to that of technique of feeling the pulse using the first three fingers of health professional's deft hand.¹⁹ This technique of feeling the pulse for diagnosis of diseases finds no mention in the earlier texts on medicine like the Caraka-Suśruta Saṁhitās or the Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya of Vāgbhaṭa I though they speak of other examinations.²⁰ It emerged as a major clinical method during the mediaeval period.²¹ Induction of this technique of foremost importance in the Āyurvedic tradition probably took place through foreign contact, Chinese, according to Priyadarajan Ray²² or as a result of interaction with the Unani system suggested by B.V. Subbarayappa.²³

This method finds first mention and elaborate enumeration in the Śāraṅgadhara Saṁhitā, a text of the thirteenth century.²⁴ The Bhāvaprakāśa provides a solid concurrence highlighting the fact that Indian doctors did not completely insulate themselves from other practices as has inaccurately been projected. In fact examination of pulse became an established practice after Bhāvaprakāśa emphatically recommended it and it was included in Aṣṭasthāna Parīkṣā or eightfold examination category; 1) pulse (Nāḍī), 2) urine (Mūtra), 3) stool (Mala), 4) tongue (Jihvā), 5) voice (Śabda), 6) sight (Dṛk), 7) touch and palpation (Sparśa) and general appearance (Ākṛti) in a text of the sixteenth century entitled Yogaratnākara.²⁵

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For medical historians the great importance of the Bhāvaprakāśa however rests on its study of a new disease aptly called Phiraṅga roga brought by the Portuguese in India²⁶ known as syphilis. Phiringi was the corruption of the word Franks, applied to refer the Europeans in general, by which appellation the Portuguese adventurers came to be known in India.²⁷ The Bhāvaprakāśa expresses in clear terms that this disease occurs through sexual contact with a Phiraṅga male or female hence it is called Āgantujaḥ vyādhi²⁸ or an intruder disease.

Existence of venereal diseases (Upadamśa) was known to India since antiquity. The symptoms given in the early texts include many of those found in the primary stage of syphilis but not the secondary and tertiary stages of the latter. Serious cases of Upadamsa are said to lead even to death if left unattended. The range of treatment included medication, application of ointment, fomentation, local venesection, process of internal cleansing, cauterisation and surgical intervention.²⁹ Though the etiology and symptoms of many diseases under this category are found in the classical medical texts of India, none of them can be equated with any degree of exactitude with the phiranga roga mentioned in the Bhāvaprakāśa.³⁰ Early Indian health professionals it appears were unfamiliar with this scourge. The first available Sanskrit medical text describe syphilis under the denomination of phiraṅga roga is The Bhāvaprakāśa of Bhāva Miśra.³¹

The sixteenth century can be considered a watershed in India's disease history. Syphilis probably the biggest disease news of this century was one of the first new diseases that entered this sub-continent through the Portuguese. Vasco da Gama's return from India (1498-1499) laden with spices opened two decades of frenzied activity as Portugal greedily sought to tap the fabulous wealth of Asia.³² Jan Huyghen Von Linschosten, a Dutch traveller sailed to Goa published a book in 1596 entitled The Itineratio of Sea Voyage of Jan Huyghen Von Linschosten to the East Portuguese Indies. Here he documented prevalence of syphilis in India and 'they are very common' was his significant comment³³ suggestive of a rampant disease invasion.

According to modern medical study syphilis is a communicable disease predominantly transferred by sexual contact and caused by a specific infective micro-organism Spirochete Treponema Pallidum. It develops through three clinical stages; primary, secondary and tertiary. Clinical manifestations are extremely protean or variable and capable at the tertiary stage of affecting any system of human body, hence the most dreaded.³⁴

Etymology of the word syphilis is uncertain. Syphilis took its name from Girolambo Francastoro's well-known poem Syphilis sive morbus gallicus published at Venice in 1530 in which the central character was an infected shepherd-boy named Syphilus who for insulting the Sun-god Apollo was punished with a horrible disease that brought out foul sores on his body. The Italian humanist physician poet coined this phrase to designate the disease that had already been called in different names since its eruptions in Europe.³⁵

He advanced the first contagionist theory in 1546 in *De Contagionibus* and contended its spread by seeds sown by human contact.³⁶ The notion of contagion became familiar, fearsome but contentious because of its weighty moral as well as medical overtones.³⁷ The Italian physician Nicolaus Leonicensis however wrote in 1497 one of the first treatises on this disease meaning of the title being 'On the Epidemic Vulgarly called the French disease'.^{37a}

Historical origin of syphilis is rather obscure. Medical historiography suggests that history of syphilis was initiated with its eruption in Europe in 1490s. Many historians subscribe to the contention that syphilis was non-existent elsewhere in the Old World until it appeared in Naples shortly after the return of Christopher Columbus, the Italian navigator in the service of Spain from his first voyage to the New World in 1492³⁸ The first case of this terrible disease however is believed to have been detected in Barcelona in 1493.³⁹

In 1494 many Spanish sailors who accompanied Columbus and had contracted syphilis in the New World took active participation in the clash between France and Spain over the question of the Kingdom of Naples. These men transmitted the disease to many camp followers as well as residents of Naples. In fact it was the ravages of syphilis that finally dispersed the invading French army under Charles VIII (1483-1498). After the fall of Naples the disease was carried throughout the known World within a short span of time.⁴⁰

Uncertain geographical and historical origin of syphilis had generated scholarly controversy since the period of European Enlightenment. The dispute over syphilis revolved round America versus Europe or the New World versus the Old World wielding a variety of documental proofs and paleopathological evidence still remains an unsettled debate.⁴¹ Evidence of treponematoses in the skeletal bones of pre-Columbus South American Indians coupled with its appearance in Europe in an epidemic form after return of Columbus provided support to the theory of American origin of syphilis. Some other medical historians however refuted this theory and pinpointed that the disease existed in Europe of pre-Columbus adventure in an unidentified form and often confused with leprosy which too was considered highly communicable, believed to be transmitted through sexual contact and had hereditary features and responded to mercury therapy.⁴² The great variety of signs and symptoms in all stages of syphilis is the reason why the disease has earned the epithet 'the great imitator'.⁴³ Diagnosis of syphilis therefore remained elusive due to its symptomatic affinities with a host of diseases. It existed in a dormant form only to appear virulently after the interaction between the Europeans and the inhabitants of the New World.⁴⁴

No one however wanted to be held responsible for this vile disease. The French preferred to call it Neapolitan disease, the Italian sources documented it as the French sickness, an outcome of the French invasion on the fragile Italian political equilibrium, the Portuguese termed it the Spanish disease, to the Turks it was the Christian disease and in India it was designated as the Phiraṅga roga, believed to be gifted by the Portuguese.⁴⁵ It was indeed the most disowned affliction of history.

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Keeping the disease entity within the strict historico-cultural context it is much more important to note the time from which it received the true focus. Syphilis was considered new in Europe in 1490s and was perceived as an incurable disease consisting of severe bone-aches, of sores usually beginning in the genitals and eventually affecting most or all of the body, Extensive research indicates that contemporary medical and lay evidence in Europe concurred in categorising it as one of the most serious calamities that Europe had ever encountered with in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries.⁴⁶

Its repercussions were strongly felt in India too and contextualisation of the medical treatise Bhāvaprakāśa attains a new dimension as it rightly documented emergence of a new disease that entered India through the foreign intruders very soon when geographical discoveries formed one of the most startling developments of Europe; the strongest incentive being furnished by commercial ambition and competition. This endeavour culminated in the discovery of the sea-route to India by Vaso da Gama in 1498 and induction of politics by the Portuguese into the ocean.⁴⁷ Moreover, it correctly narrated the etiology and symptoms of this disease hitherto unknown in this sub-continent and its Management.

It is a widely known historical fact that the Portuguese had firmly established themselves at Goa and some other parts of India like Daman, Diu, Calicut and Cochin by the turn of the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ Surprisingly, large number of Portuguese made the decision to emigrate from the Portuguese territory and seek their fortunes at different Indian courts such as Vijaynagar usually as gunners, cavalrymen and mercenaries. By 1565 according to the Portuguese chronicler Joan de Barros, there were at least two thousand Portuguese fighting in armies of different Indian princes.⁴⁹ They even intermingled with the natives through social interaction and marital relations.⁵⁰

As a result of intercourse of the Indians with the Portuguese the dreadful venereal disease called syphilis appeared in Indian disease panorama, and the Bhāvaprakāśa emphatically asserted that by the time of its compilation it was widely prevalent among the Phiraṅgas (Phiraṅga sañjāke deśe bāhulyenaiva yat bhavet), it was a communicable disease primarily transmitted through sexual contact (Phiraṅgānāmaṅga saṁsargasphiraṅgiya) and it was an import to this country (Vyādhirāgantujah).⁵¹ As revealed in the text, the chronic and acute miasm of phiranga roga could be diagnosed through diverse manifestations ranging from sores, genital lesions, aches and bone involvement bringing with it tragic and destructive lesions and eventually affecting all systems of the body.⁵²

Experience and observations of the Bhāvaprakāśa corroborate astonishingly well with symptoms of syphilis enumerated in modern medical literature⁵³ according to which it develops into three clinical stages; primary, secondary and tertiary.⁵⁴ The Bhāvaprakāśa too makes specific mention of three distinct stages of the phiraṅga roga, 1) external (bāhya), 2) internal (abhyantara) and 3) external-internal (bāhyābhyantara) underlining the fact that

it is easily curable (sukha-sādhya) in the first stage, may be cured with difficulty (kaṣṭha-sādhya) in the second stage but almost incurable (asādhya) in the tertiary stage.⁵⁵

The objective of treatment of syphilis was to initiate healing of existing lesions, to prevent further damage and spread of pathological process.⁵⁶ In the early days no specific remedy was known in Europe and various drugs having little or no effect was employed, Mercury was the first to have any appreciable effect on the disease.⁵⁷ In the management of phiraṅga roga the Bhāvaprakāśā also recommended a mercurial preparation called Rasakarpūra in the form of a pill.⁵⁸ Along with Rasakarpūra a host of potent herbs like Saptāśālī, Jaṭāmāṁsī, Nim leaves, cumin seeds of two varieties, black Pippalī, Patraka (bay leaf) Keśara (saffron) sandal wood paste etc. find mention in this text for therapeutic compositions.⁵⁹ In fact mercury remedy with other metallic compounds (gandhaka) in the forms of pill, powder, ointment and fumigation comes here under sharp focus.⁶⁰

From elixir alchemy and its presumed immortalising potential to a new endeavour of iatro or medical chemistry was indeed a quantum jump in India, comments B.V. Subbarayappa.⁶¹ The chlorides of mercury are found to be medically used in India from the twelfth century onwards and various recipes for their preparations find elaboration in the texts of Rasa medicine and one of the earliest accounts seems to occur in the Rasārṇava (ch. 11. 24).⁶²

Since the time of the Śāraṅgadhara Saṁchitā a thirteenth century text, medical literature in Sanskrit made specific mention of mercurial remedy for venereal diseases under the category of Upadamśa.⁶³ The Bhāvaprakāśa while enumerating the efficacy of Rasakarpūra in the context of phiraṅga roga cited several texts on Rasa medicine to highlight the existence of an earlier tradition (Pūrva-cikitsā) of mercury therapy/treatment in India.⁶⁴ The texts mentioned include Rasapradīpa, Rasāmṛta, and Rasendra-cintāmaṇi.⁶⁵ Garcia da Orta, a distinguished Portuguese physician who reached Goa in 1534 and tried to collect as much knowledge as possible of Oriental Materia Medica in his celebrated work commonly called Coloquios, the first Portuguese book to be printed in 1563 recorded that Indian health professionals used mercury for medicine.⁶⁶ J.C. Sikdar brings to our notice that Vaidyaka Saṁgraha, a Gujarati manuscript of an unknown author assigned to the eighteenth century also speaks of continuity of mercury treatment for phiranga roga that had already been widespread in India.⁶⁷

Another facet of Bhāva Miśra's medical proficiency and pragmatic attitude is incorporation of a new medicine Copa-cīnī in his text as a cure to phiraṅga roga⁶⁸ that finds mention even in his pharmacological work Guṇaratnamālā.⁶⁹ Copa-cīnī was the tuberous root of a climbing thorny shrub frequent in China and Japan from which the drug was derived in the form of powder or of liquid after decoction,⁷⁰ botanically known as Smilax China Linn and Smilax Japonica A. Gray.⁷¹ The Portuguese introduced this hard and tuberous root to India from China and termed it 'raiz da China' or China root.⁷² It came to

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be known as Chob-i-Chini in Persian and Copa-cīnī in Sanskrit. Alien origin of the drug is implied by the Telegu terminology Piraṅgi Chekka and Paringay in Tamil.⁷³

This specific root had long been in use in China and was mentioned as early as the sixth century A.D. by Thao Hung Ching, the author of Pen Tshao Ching Chi Chua a celebrated medical commentary. It was a drug-plant already in repute for diseases of the urino-genital system.⁷⁴ In the sixteenth century it became extremely popular for the treatment of syphilis and made an official entry into the European pharmacopaeias.⁷⁵

In the early medical texts of China however there is no record of syphilis. It was probably first introduced to the island of-Tunmen in Guangdong province through the Portuguese traders⁷⁶ who broke age-old isolation of China and initiated the beginning of East-West contact.⁷⁷ It was not until 1542 or 1543, the actual date still uncertain that Japan made her first direct contact with the Western world. This was when a party of three Portuguese in a Chinese junk landed on her shores⁷⁸ and syphilis entered the Archipelago. The Japanese immediately dubbed the disease as the 'Chinese pox'(togasa).⁷⁹

Such rapid diffusion of a new disease called for new remedies and efficacy of the China root was experimented with and established. Shireen Moosvi's extensive study on the records and reminiscences in relation to the Mughal emperor Akbar indicates that Chob-i-Chini or China root earlier unknown was only a recent intruder in the drug-scenario as a cure to syphilis.⁸⁰ Garcia de Orta writing his Colloquies in 1563 at Goa highlights 1535 as the exciting year when a cure of syphilis was first accomplished through the China root.⁸¹ Orta admitted China root superior to Guaiacum sanctum used in Europe to treat syphilis. Guaiacum, an organic substance derived from a South American tree was brought to Sevilla in Spain by the early Spanish explorers. In 1517 Nicolao Poll who later became physician to the emperor Charles V (1519-1558) noted that providentially this remedy came from the same country from which came the disease.⁸² Jan Huyghen Van Linschoten in the late sixteenth century endorsed that in India syphilis is treated with 'the roote China'⁸³

Response to China root it appears was immediate and unhesitating. Āyurveda and Unani, the two significant facets of medical system in mediaeval India acknowledged its curative power. In Sanskrit medical literature its incorporation is marked by mention of Copa-cīnī Cūrṇa in the Bhāvaprakāśa for management of phiraṅga roga. Taking cue from this text subsequent treatises on Āyurveda as late as the eighteenth century allotted space for treatment of phiraṅga roga with Copa-cīnī.⁸⁴ Irfan Habib's penetrating studies of diverse original Persian sources suggest that Chob-i Chini's reception in the Unani medical system was accomplished by the thirties of the sixteenth century.⁸⁵

This root for specific treatment of syphilis was hailed in China, Japan and Europe and in 1546 Brussels-born anatomist Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), author of the epochal work *De humani libri septem corpofis fabrica* (The Seven Books on the Structure of the Human

Body, commonly known as 'fabrica') even published a small monograph entitled 'Letters on the China Root'. (86) At least six editions of this followed before the turn of the sixteenth century⁸⁷ suggestive of immense popularity of this tiny book.

The phenomenal response to China root in the domain of medicine and health care has primarily been gazed as a desperate attempt to search for a new therapy for a new and loathsome disease for which the existing prescriptions were of no avail.⁸⁸ It probably provided some degree of relief by arresting further damage and decay. It was highly prized as an anti-syphilitic and Reports from the health professionals in relation to 'good cures' of syphilis achieved by its use in India is available as late as 1893 that validates efficacy of this, therapeutic approach.⁸⁹

Frantic search for newer modalities however continued in the global perspective to combat this disease. In 1910 the German scientist Paul Ehrlich (1854-1915) introduced an arsenic compound hailed as an important drug for curing syphilis.⁹⁰ Significantly, the *Bṛhat Yogataraṅginī* by Trimalla Bhaṭṭa a text of mid seventeenth century makes mention of use of arsenic compound (*Śāmkhiya*) for the first time as a cure to *phiraṅga roga* though it did not miss to refer to the *Bhāvaprakāśa* in the context of this disease.⁹¹ The question of India's priority in the use of arsenic compound for disease management needs a serious investigation and scrutiny.⁹²

In early 1920's however in western medicine bismuth (non-metallic) appeared which was considered more effective and better tolerated in conjunction of arsenial preparations for the treatment of syphilis in all stages.⁹³ Penicillin the first specific cure for syphilis was discovered in 1928 by the British bacteriologist Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) who became one of the leading experts of his time in the treatment of this dreadful disorder.⁹⁴ Emergence of penicillin in the therapeutic field itself was a revolution, From 1950s the incidence of syphilis remarkably fell. From 1980s HIV/AIDS becomes the most devastating sexually transmitted 'new' disease to emerge since 1490s but that is a different issue altogether.

Situated or relocated the *Bhāvaprakāśa* within a specific historical conjuncture, its relevance and uniqueness can best be appreciated. It has set a trend of transcending all barriers of social conservatism and insularism for enrichment of the knowledge system and establishing the idea that medical science has no fenced barriers. *Bhāva Mīśra* made the most significant historical comment that a physician who is a genuine scholar (*Budha*) need not restrict himself to the traditional system only. He should observe and perceive thoroughly with his own reason and intellect and utilize knowledge provided by other systems too.⁹⁵ *Bhāva Mīśra*, the author of this text thus on the one hand acknowledged the classical masters, exponents of the *Rasa* system and local indigenous traditions, on the other liberally accepted the new knowledge and practices introduced by the Portuguese who inadvertently spearheaded the spread of syphilis as far east as Japan. Some scholars

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suggest that the Unani system has also influenced him in the induction of new ingredients for drug hitherto not been incorporated into the Sanskrit medical literature.⁹⁶ In fact by the sixteenth century co-existence of Āyurveda and Unani systems led to a considerable interchange of pharmacopoliās.⁹⁷

Historically the text underlines inter-cultural reactions and relations of the sixteenth century in the area of health science and integrationist approach of Indian medicine. The spectrum and range of thinking not only reflect the intensity of intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli but also the promptness to accept throbbing realities and an adaptability or great capacity for response to change. It shows an adjustment to political, socio-cultural and patho-physiological changes in Indian horizon in the sixteenth century.

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95. B. P. Part 1. p. 164, verses 30-31. *Caikānte nibiṣṭe śāstre budhah svayamapyanya bhiṣajā tarkanīya cikitsata 30 bibarjitain karma kartabyam bhabatityartha 31.*
96. *Ibid*, Introduction p. 7; Samarendranath Sen *op. cit.* Vol. 2. p. 76; Special mention of Badaksani Naspāti (*B.P.* Part 1. p. 590), Sulemam Kharjura (*B.P.* Part 1. p. 587), Dvīpāntara vaca, Ahiphena etc (*B.P.* Part. 1, p. 586) is of historical significance.
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“Hundreds of noble minstrels have recited this history (Itihasa). Some are doing it now and many will do it in the ages to come.”

—Anukramanika, Adiparvan, *Mahabharata*.

The perpetual popularity of the epic among the Indians was anticipated by its author in the above couplet. Truly, Mahabharata has reached out to the Indians through every conceivable medium. Even the latest rage, television could not remain immune to its charm. The massively hit serial ‘Mahabharata’, directed by B.R. Chopra, followed by similar attempts, proves the point. Eminent Indian directors have expressed their desires at various times to make screen-epics based on Mahabharata, but unfortunately none of the ventures could take off.

In this paper we would try to discuss the effort of the Bengali intellectuals, especially of the minor local historians to prove the historicity of the characters and events described in the epic, and establish a connection between them and the antiquity of their own locality. Before this we may here attempt a survey of some aspects of the methodology of criticism of the epic. This unique literary creation has received the attention of the pedants right from the emergence of Indology as a discipline in the 1780’s. Since then mainly two approaches have been trodden upon by the historians to bring out elements of genuine history from this huge conglomeration of all sorts of topics. The 1st way simply excludes the supernatural components and gross exaggerations from the main narrative and tries to arrange the remaining text in a coherent manner. The result, it is claimed is a work of tolerable historical authenticity. The 2nd is a much more complex and multilayered mode which assumes that some of the characters and events found in the composition may be historical but the whole structure is certainly not. A later day author or a board of authors constructed the standard plot on the basis of number of isolated bardic lores, legends and Vedic imagaries and nature myths. Thus all the principal performers of the saga were definitely not present together nor did all the major events take place in a logical sequence during a condensed timespan. Examples of the 1st school can be found in the writings of F. E. Pargiter, A. D. Pusalker, R. C. Majumder, Sisir Kumar Sen and above all Bankim Chandra. Their viewpoint has been summed up by Bankim in his Krishnacharitra. ‘After going through Mahabharata repeatedly I have come to realize that the text consists of three distinct layers. 1st the skeleton plot, where the biography of the Pandavas and Krishna are found. Then there is another layer, which is different from the 1st one. This too has a logical structure. This is more philosophical and thus less poetic. If the elements

of the 1st stratum are removed then the whole text loses its meaning. But if the 2nd peel is taken off, the essential structure remains unaffected. A 3rd sheet was later constructed by several authors over centuries, who added many episodes of varying qualities and tastes to the main body. Whatever is not there in the 1st slab we would reject as unhistorical and figments of poetic imagination.' (Chatterjee, pg-373-4) Guided by such principles, Sisir Kumar Sen wrote an entire volume to sort out original structure of the fabliau. (Sen.) First, he discussed the methodology and conclusion of editors of the Poona Critical Edition of Mahabharata (1933-66). Then he pointed out the discrepancies that still remained in the text and listed the episodes which were interpolations and crude descriptions of supernatural incidents. The script devoid of these parts, represented, according to Sen, the initial Bharatsamhita compiled by Vyasa himself. A similar attempt, on the lines of Pargiter, was made by A.D. Pusalker in the 1st volume (The Vedic Age) of the 'History and Culture of the Indian people.'

However, such straight forward constructions came under severe criticism from another shoal of scholars. A. L. Basham rated these efforts as half-baked and reminiscent of the early days of Biblical criticism when the aim was 'rejecting the supernatural and combining the remaining material as coherently as possible.' (Basham 1961, p. 269-70) He lamented that while in Europe these methods were obsolete, in India they still remained in demand. Basham here wrote about V. Smith: 'It seems that Smith despite his thirty years' service in the I.C.S, never really came to terms with the land or its people. The imaginative and intellectual effort demanded in order to see the world through the eyes of a people not nurtured in a culture based on the Bible and the classics was too much for him.' Pp. 269-270.

He dubbed Pargiter's attempt as 'unfortunate' which 'produced an aftermath of wasted effort in the form of several monographs, in which able Indian scholars ingeniously juggle with king lists....' (Ibid. p. 291) Significantly, Basham pointed out that 'to make any historical sense of the epics such puerile probings would not be enough, and 'subtler methods are necessary, involving very thorough analysis of the available sources, and careful comparison of the resultant data with the scanty evidence of archaeology.' (Ibid opp cit) D.D Kosambi was more explicit about the methodological issue. About Pargiter's logic and its followers he wrote, 'Nothing could be more explicit or more inaccurate than this imagined reconstruction.....There seems to be no objection at first sight to the hypothesis of dynasties ruling in India about 1600 B.C. in much the same way as in A.D. 1600 with superficial changes in names.....This facile reasoning ignores the essential difference between the two fertile alluvial basins of the Indus and the Ganges.' (Chattopadhyaya 2002, p. 352-3). Thus Kosambi pointed out that Pargiter had missed out the finer socio-economic issues of ancient Indian history, and over-simplified the annals of the pre-historic age. For Kosambi the original events of the epic were nothing more

than trifling local conflicts. The real point of interest was how a variety of 'originally unrelated and even contradictory' traditions clustered round the maiden bardic lays to form an unlikely whole. The addition of every element in the main body indicated the arrival of a new socio-economic factor in the Indian milieu. As examples we may note the prominence given to the Nagas and the late introduction of Lord Krishna in the poesy.

Sukumar Sen, in his 'Bharatkathar Granthimochon' (Untying the knots of the Bharata lore), (Sen. 1981) tried to decode the multi-layered creation with the help of philology and Vedic myths. He too dismantled the symmetric structure built by Majumdar and Pusalkar and discovered several independent elements adding up to make the standard format. According to him, the skeleton of Mahabharata consisted of two parts, a kernel story and an outer story. The former was a primitive folk-tale found in many countries which depicted the adventures of two brothers, the elder with sharp brain and the younger with powerful brawn.ⁱⁱⁱ Here this tale had taken the shape of the exploits of the Pandava siblings (Yudhisthira and Bhima) against the Kaurava brothers and other demons like Vaka and Hidimba. The latter, outer layer of the initial structure was formed by a yarn describing a Kuru-Panchala conflict where the Panchalas led by a hermaphrodite felled the two premier Kuru hopes, Bhishma and Drona. The Vedic Indra vs Vrtra and Indra vs Martanda myths cast their shadows over the making of this episode. Out of this archetypal hermaphrodite, later authors created the characters of Sikhandin, Dhristadyumna, Draupadi and above all Arjuna, the conventional hero of Mahabharata. Sen, too rated Krishna as a late entrant in the epic. Thus, we see that pedants, since the establishment of historiography as a serious vocation in India, have approached the problem of the historicity of Mahabharata mainly from two angles, one more simplistic and the other more multifaceted, and complex. More recently Rajesh Kocchar and Romila Thapar expressed their opinion on the subject, following the latter school. But we must not unduly belittle the conclusions of the 1st drove, as it had members like H.C. Raychaudhuri and R.C. Majumder who did much to unearth new facts about pre-Buddhist South Asia.

II

With this background in mind, we can proceed towards the main theme of our discussion. But before that a cursory glance at the Bengali intellectual obsession with Vyasa's brain-child would not be out of place. We note an attempt to translate Ramayana and Mahabharata in Bengali even during the early days of Turko-Islamic rule in Bengal. Initial translators of Mahabharata who deserve a mention were Kavindra Parameshwar and Srikara Nandi. However none of them dared to translate the entire epic and confined themselves to selected portions. They were followed by Ramchandra Khan, Dwija Raghunath, Pitambar Das and Aniruddha Ramsaraswati. Their efforts were similarly circumscribed. Among these litterateurs Jaimini's *Asvamedha Parvan* was specially popular, possibly owing to its short

length, compared to Vaishampayana's version. The distinction of making a bid to render the whole work in Bengali went to Kasiram Das. (Gupta 2004, p. 151) At the beginning of the 17th century, he transcreated quite a few parvans including Adi, Sabha and Vana. His effort later attained fruition in the hands of Nandaram Das, Krishnananda Basu, and Jayanta Das. Thus, though he could not complete his noble mission, Kasiram succeeded in inspiring a tradition that was kept alive by his successors. Actually during the middle ages there was a conscious attempt by a section of Bengali intellectuals to join the mainstream of Hinduism practiced in North India. (Sircar 2005) The project of translating Mahabharata in the vernacular for the masses can be held as a part of this. Apart from the above mentioned cases, there was a massive body of literature centred around Lord Krishna, penned by Vaishnava poets and others.¹⁴ But these do not come under the purview of our discussion.

With the establishment of British rule and the introduction of western episteme priorities changed for the Bengali intellectuals. For the new English-educated 'bhadraloks' it became an essential priority to prove authentically that the Bengalis had a history which was ancient enough. Also it had to be shown to counter the colonial charges of effeminacy and cowardice that the Bengalis had a number of brave deeds to their credit. So strenuous attempts were made to prove the historicity of the epics, especially Mahabharata and link them somehow with the past of the Bengalis. At that stage nothing was known about the Mehergarh culture and the Harappan civilization and the incidents described in the epics and the major Puranas were seen as evidences of India's earliest history. The most important work in this regard composed during the 19th century was Bankimchandra's 'Krishnacharitra'. No conscious attempt was made here to connect the epic with the Bengalis. Rather Bankim's aim was to establish the credibility of the historical sense of the Hindus as a whole. Amongst Bengali intellectuals the script drew mixed response. Tagore wrote that Bankim scrutinised the shastras with the help of historical logic and questioned the age old beliefs. Thus he re-established the glory of human reason. (Gupta 2004, p. 360) On the other hand, Tagore's elder brother Dwijendranath and Swami Vivekananda severely criticized Bankim for his one sided arguments which were influenced by positivism.

One of the most elaborate bids to connect the epic characters with the Bengalis was made by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his 'Brihat Banga'. (Sen 1341 B.E.) This was a history of Bengal written with a traditional mindset and based on indigenous sources. Here he mentioned a number of legends recorded in the publications of local analysts which indicated the connections of the particular areas with Mahabharata. Based on the text, Sen proclaimed a peculiar view of his own. He highly eulogized Jarasandha and his associates like Paundra Vasudeva, Naraka, Mura and Bhagadatta. He rejected the Mahabharata and Harivamsa versions which portrayed them as villains and projected them as heroes of Eastern India or Greater Bengal (Brihat Banga). According to this deconstructive version

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of Sen, these potentates of Eastern India adhered to a pacific form of Saivism and opposed the Brahmanical religion based on Vedic sacrifices preached by Lord Krishna and the Pandavas. This spirit of rebellion against religious and cultural establishment was preserved in Bengal through out the ages and manifested itself in the efforts of Sri Chaitanya, the Mangal Kavya poets and the Bauls. So we should be proud of such pioneers like Jarasandha. Another anti-hero of Mahabharata, Karna was also praised by Sen as he was the ruler of Anga (Bhagalpur) in the vicinity of Bengal. Besides, Sen tried to locate the places mentioned in the text like Manipur within Bengal. However Sen himself was not entirely convinced of the historicity of Mahabharata and therefore the viability of his own essay. This is proved by the following quote from 'Brihat Banga'.

'We cannot accept the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas as history proper, though they contain valuable historical materials.....Often the local historians go at ridiculous length to prove the connection of their locality with the epics. The value of sub-regional legends should not be underestimated, but tendency is unhealthy.' (Ibid. p. 7 and 32) This inner lack of confidence remained a hallmark of the Bengali proto-history cultivation during this period.

A rather extreme case of Bengali infatuation with Mahabharata was presented by Atul Sur in his 'Mahabharat O Sindhusavyata' (Sur A. 1988) (Mahabharata and the Indus Civilization). This noted anthropologist rejected the normally accepted view that the battle of Kurukshetra took place between 1400 and 900 B.C and supported the traditional Indian opinion that it happened either in 3102 B.C or 2448 B.C. (Ibid. p. 13 and 31) Thus the dramatis personae of the epic were members of a pre-vedic culture most probably that of the Indus Valley. More eye-brow raising was Sur's claim that the Pandavas had a long sojourn in Bengal and Draupadi was a Bengali! His view was based on the fact that the Pandavas fled to Ekchakra from Varanavata and the only place of that name in all India is found in Birbhum. Besides, there are a number of legends current in the district which point towards the presence of the Pandavas there. Boldly, he tried to prove that the Kurus and the Panchalas belonged, not to Aryavarta, but to Bengal. (Ibid. p. 25 and 35) He identified the river Charmanvati, on whose southern banks the kingdom of Panchala was situated, not with Chambal, but with the Chamwan stream in Bhagalpur district. Thus his Panchala was situated in Bengal-Bihar border. Racially, for him, the Pandavas belonged to the Alpine Aryan sept, who reached India earlier than the Nordics and concentrated in Eastern India.

Other than these pedants, there were numerous intellectuals who contributed on Mahabharata profusely to prove the Bengali attachment with the work. Especially a large number of plays were produced to satisfy the demands of the Kolkata stage. In fact the 1st Bengali play, 'Bhadrarjuna' (1832) was based on Mahabharata.

III

With this perspective in mind, we may now give a look at how the local historians viewed the epic and tried to connect it with their own terrain. The 1st distinct work of local history in Bengali was Kalikamal Sarbabhauma's 'Bagura Brittanta' (1861). In this very work we note the above mentioned tendency. After this, we would select some examples from various local histories and evaluate the writers' attachment with Mahabharata.

Swarup Chandra Ray in his 'Suvamagramer Itihas' wrote 'During their exile in the forest, Yudhisthira and his brother came to Langalbaddha and the Panchami Ghat. They performed their holy rites there and so this place is held in high esteem by the pilgrims. This fact is proved beyond doubt. (Ray reprint 2001, p. 21)'. Achyutacharan Chaudhuri Tatvanidhi, in his 'Srihatter Itibritta' tried to establish the North-Eastern connection of the Pandavas.

'In the Jaimini Mahabharata we find that Arjuna came to the "Kingdom of women" and fought its ruler. According to the scholars, this state was situated in today's Jaintia. Even in children's text this fact is mentioned. It is written there that the queen of Jaintia, Pramila arrested the horse, meant for Yudhisthira's horse sacrifice and released it only after her marriage with Arjuna'. (Chaudhuri Tattvanidhi 1317 B.E. p. 156) He also took great pain to prove that the Manipur of Mahabharata was identical with the present North-Eastern state and king Bhagadatta was a historical figure and his capital lay at Laur in Srihatta. (Ibid. p. 156 and notes of p. 157).

In his 'Murshidabader Itihas', Nikhilnath Ray claimed 'Rangamati (a place south-west of Murshidabad), according to legends, was the seat of Karna, the eldest son of Kunti. Karna invited king Bibhisana of Lanka for his son's christening ceremony. There the demon king distributed so much gold that a lot was left on the ground. Owing to this the surface looked red and the place came to be known as 'Rangamati'. There are many legends current about Karna here. So it can be safely concluded that there was intimate association of Karna with this place. (Ray reprint 2008, p. 417-8) Satishchandra Mitra in his 'Jessore-Khulnar Itihas' viewed the incidents of Mahabharata from a distinct angle. 'During the epic age the Aryan civilization was well established in Bengal. At the time of Yudhisthira's Rajasuya sacrifice, Bhima was in charge of conquering the East. There he met with gallant resistance from king Vasudeva of Paundra and Manauja of Kaushiki...This Vasudeva was a rival of Sri Krishna and was a close ally of Eastern monarchs like Naraka and Jarasandha'. (Mitra reprint 2001, Vol. I, p. 316).

Here, Mitra extolled the might of the Bengalis who had the guts to challenge the epic heroes, Sri Krishna and Bhima. Another author who sought sanction for the antiquities of Bengal from the epics was Jogendranath Gupta. He in his 'Vikrampur Itihas wrote' 'the name Vanga is mentioned a number of times in Ramayana and Mahabharata. It seems from the Ramayana that the Bengalis were a people of considerable importance. The

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Mahabharata also refers to Vanga frequently and deals with the origin of the name'. (Gupta 2004, p. 62) Several such references to Mahabharata as these can be cited from the local histories. Someone like Kalinath Chaudhuri, the writer of 'Rajshahir Samkhipta Itihas' went to the extent of claiming that his Rajshahi was the Matsya kingdom ruled by king Virata. While Prabhaschandra Sen in his 'Bagurar Itihas' located the capital of Paundra Vasudeva in Mahasthangarh in his own district. Amazingly, this tendency has persisted even today. A contemporary local chronicler Yajneshwar Chaudhuri, in his multi volume 'Barddhaman Itihas O Samskriti' opined that the Prasumha region mentioned in the epic was identical with Barddhaman. (Chaudhury 1994, Vol. I, p. 130).

How should we judge this rather undue attachment of the Bengali men-of-letters to the epic? Dineshchandra Sen, who often banked on sub-regional annals for his Brihat Banga, was sceptic of the jingoistic claims of the local historians. We have already touched upon his views earlier. Here we may consider them in some detail. He had a book called Bhawaler Itihas' by Nabinchandra Bhadra. In this local history it was claimed that the capital of king Sishupala of Chedi was in Bhawal (near Dhaka). However Sen rejected this and opined that the Sishupala of Bhawal was possibly a minor scion of the Pala dynasty. Later day public memory confused him with the epic villain and the credulous local pedant believed the yarn. Sen found it really difficult to believe that the palaces and gardens from the epic days had survived into the 19th century. Sen also pointed out how Kailashchandra Sinha had rejected the claims of the Tripura royalty of being descendents of Mahabharata hero, king Yayati. Sen concluded that in the early medieval age the Brahmins had established completely imaginary connections between leading Bengali families and epic characters. This they did in order to wipe off Buddhist influence from Bengal. (Sen, p.-39) So, why did the local historians rely on such fantasies?

To find an answer we have to delve deep into the 'bhadralok' psyche of the mid-19th century. By then the difference between the Orientalist and Anglicist views on Indian history had become clear. The first generation of westernized Bengali historians like Rajkrishna Mukherjee, Bhudeb Mukherjee, Tarinicharan Chatterjee and Nilmani Basak sought to refute the disparaging charges brought against the Hindu Bengalis by British pedants like James Mill. This they did with the help of Orientalist researches done by H.H Wilson, Seeley and Max-muller. The Orientalist conclusion which the Bengalis really took to their heart was that the Hindus were the descendants of ancient 'Aryans', who were also the forefathers of the English ruling class. So strenuous attempts were made to establish a connection between the Bengali Bhadrakok and the mythical Aryans. This would place the peripheral Bengalis on an equal footing with the master British. (Chowdhury 1996) The striving to locate the places connected with Mahabharata, the most important heroic literature of the Aryans should be seen as a part of this hegemonic nationalist discourse. There could not be a better way of proving one's antiquity than to associate

oneself with the epic heroes! In this, the minor local historians were merely following the lead of major intellectuals like Rajkrishna Mukherjee and Pareshchandra Bannerjee. The latter in his 'Banglar Purabritta' (1314 B.E) devoted a whole chapter in establishing the Bong connection with the Aryans and Mahabharata. He concluded : 'One must not doubt the historicity of Mahabharata'. (Chaudhuri 2006, p. 398) However the efforts of the micro-historians failed to impress the reading public significantly. Their contentions failed to be a part of serious history writing. Why did this happen?

The first and foremost flaw of these local pedants was their jingoism. They were mostly amateurs who collected information and artifacts about their locality. Lacking proper historical training, they often failed to keep their emotion under control. Naturally, they were given a short shift by mainstream professional historians. Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal's scathing review of Sudhir Mitra's 'Hughly Jelar Itihas' drives home this point. Besides, Kumudnath Mullick in his 'Nadia Kahani' assembled a large number of incredible anecdotes, full of supernatural elements about Sanskrit Pundits like Ramrudra Vidyanidhi and Jagannath Tarkapanchanan. Next, the local historians could not be relied upon in terms of factual accuracy as they depended upon spurious sub-regional traditions. Also antiquarians like Kailashchandra Sinha and Prabhaschandra Sen some times unduly sanskritized their diction and this made their narratives somewhat artificial. Thus the conclusion of the local historians suffered from a number of draw backs. But the publications should be remembered as products of the Bengali intellect when it was facing soul-reaching queries from European colonialism.

Notes & References

1. Thomas Bullfinch in his 'Golden Age Of Myth & Legend' collected several theories regarding the origin of Pagan mythology. Some of these are : i) Scriptural Theory. ii) The Historical Theory. iii) The Allegorical Theory. iv) The Physical Theory. v) The Linguistic Theory. vi) The Anthropological Theory. (Wordsworth, 1994) p. 367-73.
2. Details of the referred books are available in the bibliography.
3. Here a comparison can be drawn with the Greek myth of Hercules and King Augeas. Hercules was powerful but a simpleton and remained obedient to the latter.
4. Even in the 1930 and 40s, during the height of nationalist frenzy the extremists and the armed nationalists continued to adore the epic characters esp. Sri Krishna as sources of inspiration. E.g. the armed nationalist Gourchandra Saha wrote a monumental biography of Lord Krishna. Saha rated Lord Krishna as the greatest of the Revolutionary Philosophers.

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BOOK REVIEW

Dishonoured by Philosophers Upamāṇa in Indian Epistemology

—Uma Chattapadhyay

D.K. Printworld (p) Ltd., New Delhi ISBN 13:978-81-246-0520-2, ISBN 10:81-246-0520-3 includes bibliographical reference and index.

HB Rs. 580.00, US\$ 23.00

Akṣapāda Gautama enumerated four sources of knowledge, namely, perception *pratyakṣa*, inference *anumāna*, analogy *upamāna* and verbal testimony *śabda*. The definition of the knowledge by analogy is what results out of a known similarity, *prasiddha sādharmyat sādhyā-sāadhanam upamānam*. Subsequently, the Indian epistemologists raised a strong critique in understanding what Akṣapāda Gautama had defined. So diversity in analyses of the validity of knowledge by analogy becomes vigorous. Out of the four sources of knowledge, as admitted by the Indian Logicians, the valid knowledge by analogy is the adaptation of potency belonging to the sound in a verbal testimony, *śakti grāhaka*. While the case of inference *anumāna* is the justification of knowledge with a matter *vastu sādḥaka*. Hence, the source of knowledge by analogy may leave a wide gap in accepting the validity of knowledge *in prima facie*.

That opened a scope of debating among the Indian epistemologists far and wide. The explorative title of the book DISHONoured BY PHILOSOPHERS UPAMĀṆA IN INDIAN EPISTEMOLOGY is worthwhile to review the status of Akṣapāda Gautama in enumerating the knowledge by analogy as a source of knowledge. The author has critically examined the positive aspect in support of determining the validity of the knowledge by analogy although the implication of similarity *sādrśhya* demands a critical review.

The validity of the knowledge by analogy is closely dependent to the potency *śakti* of the sound *śabda* used for analogy as acceptable for all times under any circumstances *prasiddha*. There lies the issue for controversy. The Indian Epistemologists *naiyāyika* of the post-Akṣapāda Gautama had faced challenges when a school of Investigator *mīmāṃsaka* developed as a system of the Indian thoughts. The issue became poignant when the Mimamsaka investigator of actions *karma* performed by the individual or the many, as led by Jaimini, came forefront. Again, Vādarāyaṇa who emphasized on the self-nature of the All-Extensive *Brahman* with reference to the Vedic Upaniṣads, the validity of the knowledge by analogy among the Indian intelligentsia became questionable.

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Resultantly, the Indian Epistemologists (*naiyāyika*) had to face an opposition for the Indian Investigator *mīmāṃsaka* through generations in interpretation of the tenability of that which Akṣapada Gautama had defined the knowledge by analogy *upamāna* as a source of valid knowledge. Because, the epistemology and investigation of reality are dependent to the potency of the sound *śabda-śakti* pronounced by the individual or by the many in respect to the identity of an object which is real, in the phenomenal world. A sound pronounced in respect to an object as perceivable by the sense organs may refer to either singular or plural, either a male or female, either short or big in form according the characteristics of the phenomenon concerned. That leaves a room for qualifier and qualified in respect to the knowing of reality.

With above background the text examines chronologically the stand points of the Indian epistemologists and the Indian investigators in describing the import of the knowledge by analogy in comparative statements. So the book has been, divided in five parts; namely, I) Classical versions of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā Theories of Upamāna, II) the knowledge by analogy distributed in two separate sections; III) Critical Development of the Nyāya Theory of Upamāna; IV) some More Objections from Internal and External critics referring to Bhasarvajna's Nyāyaika desi view on Upamāna and Upamāna serves no purpose in Darshana; and Lastly V) Positive views of Two Naiyāyikas like Jayanta Bhaṭṭa and Udayanācārya.

The five parts, though comparative by nature either between Mimamsakas and Naiyāyikas or that between critics like Bhāṣāsarvajna and Dasashanakaros follow a consistency in the analyses of the source of knowledge by analogy. That constitutes an extraordinary strive by the learned scholar to justify the hypothesis, as Upamāna in Indian Epistemology as dishonoured by Philosophers, the Indian *Darshana-kara*. Here, the term *darshanakara* is objectively observed in respect to the order of four pramanas in a research article published in Dimensions of *Contemporary Sanskrit Research* eds Ujjal Jha and Arun Mishra, Delhi. New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi 2008. The inclusion of an analogy as a source of knowledge is not 'anomalous' but the Indian Epistemologists *naiyāyika* and the Indian Investigators *mīmāṃsaka* dispute to justify its propriety strictly on the burning question whether the knowledge of analogy is a valid source of knowledge. Both the Indian Epistemologists and the Indian Investigators through generations debated again and again to disown the knowledge of Analogy as a valid source of knowledge. For the Analogy is depended to a sound vis-à-vis a word pronounced by the individual or by a group to compare and contrast. That amounts to the moot point, whether Knowledge by analogy *upamāna* is the upholder of potency of a sound or word or speech *śakti-grahakatva* with the least determinability of valid propriety to justify the reality of an object *vastu-sādhakatva*.

Among the external critics of the knowledge by, Analogy as a source of knowledge,

the Bauddhas had opposed on account of the basic denial of a Shabda referring to sound, speech or word as the valid authority. On account of being relatively constituted. Jetāri in his *Hetutattvopadesha*, justified his position. Again, Ratnakīrti criticized also the knowledge of Analogy as valid on account of the absence of similarity in all cases of other than good analogy. Ratnakīrti's arguments have been rightly delineated in the part three of the study. The Vaisheshikas also raised the issue though their approach differed in determining the character of similarity for importency of the significance of a word or speech in many instances. Also, *Nyāyasārah* ascribed to Bhasarvajna and its follower Apararkadeva in *Nyāya Muktaṭvālī* declined to include the knowledge of Analogy by enumerating three sources of knowledge, namely perception *pratyakṣa*, inference *samanumanan* and the scriptural authority explicit in speech, word or sound *agama*. In that case, the upholding of potency of word or speech by similarity has been totally nullified.

Despite of the stern epistemological controversy regarding the propensity of Akṣapāda Gautama's enumeration of four sources of knowledge was positively confirmed by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in his *Nyāyamañjarī* and Udayanācārya in his *Nyāyakusūmañjalī* with a spirit of syncretism. In the Indian Epistemology the status of *upamiti* for adjustment of the similarity *sādrishya* is admitted as a distinct concept between the object of similarity in relation to common characteristics of being similar as the valid knowledge that provides potency of likeness not that may be diverse.

The text under review claims better, demands a re-visioning of the views of the Indian Epistemologists and those of the Indian Investigators of the valid knowledge. With reference to the basic factors of the logical 'good analogy' and 'bad analogy' of Mill in one hand; and, the potency of sound in the form of a word or speech as always characterized by meanings either explicit or implicit. The present work is itself a new look of the traditional concepts on the word and its meaning with reference to the analogy as a source of valid knowledge. It opens a scope to re-estimate the epistemological and the investigative traditions with the present day understanding of the sources of knowledge for determining validity of truth.

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